



Edited by Gregory Bracken

Ancient and Modern Practices of Citizenship in Asia and the West

Care of the Self

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Ancient and Modern Practices of Citizenship in Asia and the West



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Introduction

Gregory Bracken

Cities are not merely buildings and the spaces between them; cities are people and their networks of interaction. Cities, in other words, *are* society, and indeed many of society's finest attributes can be found in the city. It could, in fact, be argued that society is at its best *in* the city. It is the place that acts not only as the arena for society's achievements, but also enables them to come into being in the first place, by being a catalyst for them.

Cities have to rank as one of humanity's greatest achievements,¹ but to discover how living in an urban environment can influence human activity and society we need to understand what the urban environment actually is, and to what extent it can encourage (or diminish) the scope for human flourishing.

Cities operate by making use of feedback from citizens, which creates a self-sustaining system. This is also known as autopoiesis, the capacity of a system to regenerate or repair itself, which was developed by Fritjof Capra in the 1970s as part of systems theory (Shane 2005: 55). Information flow is crucial to autopoiesis, and to the maintenance of a system's structural identity. Information flow is fed back into the system through looping mechanisms, which allows balance to be maintained. This more recent understanding of how a city operates resonates with Lewis Mumford's argument that '[w]e have to stop thinking of cities as entities like trees or humans beings, which inevitably decay and die, and more like a species, which can undergo renewal and evolution' (Mumford 1989: 3).

But what is the city? How did it come into existence? Lewis Mumford tells us that the origins of the city are obscure, but when it emerged it was

¹ Note: many of the sources used throughout this book are old and as a result some of their terminology is somewhat old-fashioned, or no longer considered appropriate in these enlightened and more gender-neutral times. Please understand, therefore, that when reading quotations featuring words like 'man', 'mankind', etc., that they are understood to mean 'humanity', which obviously includes women as well as men.

already in the mature form we recognize today (1989: 4). From the beginning, the city had

an ambivalent character it has never wholly lost: it combined the maximum amount of protection with the greatest incentives to aggression: it offered the widest possible freedom and diversity, yet imposed a drastic system of compulsion and regimentation which, along with its military aggression and destruction, has become 'second nature' to civilized man and is often erroneously identified with his original biological proclivities (Mumford 1989: 46).

How did this come about? Before the city there was the village; before the village, the camp; before the camp, the cave. Yet, before any of these was the human need for social contact. In going back to the origins of the city we must not overlook the practical needs that drew families and tribes together. Before the emergence of the village, Neolithic cultures had favoured certain sites because of the protection or abundance they afforded. In the shadowy Neolithic past, well before the city became a fixed place of residence, it had its genesis as a place where people could meet seasonally.

Early human life oscillated between movement and settlement; as settlement began to take hold, villages turned into cities. Mumford says that

the magnet comes before the container, and this ability to attract non-residents to it for intercourse and spiritual stimulus no less than trade remains one of the essential criteria of the city, a witness to its inherent dynamism, as opposed to the more fixed and indrawn form of the village, hostile to the outsider (Mumford 1989: 9-10).

Mumford also highlights, however, just how much the city owes the village: 'the granary, the bank, the arsenal, the library, the store' (Mumford 1989: 16); without the long period of agricultural and domestic development that predated both village and city, urban life would not have been possible. And even more importantly, Mumford identifies the fact that 'without the forethought and conscious moral discipline that Neolithic culture introduced in every department, it is doubtful if the more complex social co-operation brought in with the city could have emerged' (Mumford 1989: 12).

The components of village life were carried forward and incorporated into the new urban unit, becoming recomposed in a way that was more complex and unstable than in the village—and yet, as Mumford correctly points out, it was this very complexity and instability that promoted further

transformation and development (Mumford 1989: 29). Specialization emerged: kings, aristocrats and priests, merchants and soldiers. Together they created a higher-order urban unity that was an inevitable result of the new social complexity. This also resulted in an explosion of human capability: the city could mobilize manpower, could command long-distance transportation; it became a hotbed of invention, which in turn promoted agricultural improvement, leading to larger populations and larger cities.

The city's rise was built on older, pre-existing cultural elements, but what gave it its new power to effect change was the way they were brought together. This increase in efficiency and scope led to an 'urban revolution' (a term coined by archaeologist V. Gordon Childe (1950)). It was this revolution, where small but important portions of humanity first became urban, that led to what we now think of as civilization.

Civilization emerged in the city and created much of what we now most treasure in society; Mumford lists 'the written record, the library, the archive, the school, and the university' (Mumford 1989: 30-31). To this we can add culture and democracy. Mumford sees the city

as a structure specially equipped to store and transmit the goods of civilization, sufficiently condensed to afford the maximum amount of facilities in a minimum space, but also capable of structural enlargement to enable it to find a place for the changing needs and the more complex forms of a growing society and its cumulative social heritage (Mumford 1989: 30).

Mumford sees civilization as having emerged from 'the critical change that brought both kingship and the city into existence, the first as the incarnation, the second as the embodiment of "civilization"' (Mumford 1989: 48), and that '[a]t some point, power and control brightened into justice' (Mumford 1989: 49).

All cities have the capacity for civilized life, but only some have attained the dazzling heights of Periclean Athens, Florence under the Medicis, or *Belle Époque* Paris and also twelfth-century Angkor and Suzhou under the Southern Song Dynasty. Part of what constitutes civilized life is civility. Richard Sennett tells us that 'city' and 'civility' have a common etymological root. He says that

[c]ivility is treating others as though they were strangers and forging a social bond upon that social distance. The city is that human settlement in which strangers are most likely to meet. The public geography of a city is civility institutionalised (Sennett 1992: 18).

What separates a city that has achieved a high level of civilization from one that has not? I think it is the capacity for what I would call the ‘good life’: the ability a city has to allow its citizens to flourish—*all* its citizens (something that is explored in Chapter 1, ‘Citizenship and the Good Life’). As cities grow in size and complexity, and as their citizens increasingly define the ‘good life’ in material terms, Peter Hall shows the importance of citizens’ ability to ‘acquire the political power to insist on their right to that good life, so does the maintenance of the urban order require a steadily greater sphere of collective action’ (1998: 6).

The twenty-first century, with its new urban turn (because now, for the first time in history, more people are living in cities than outside of them) humanity has undergone a second ‘urban revolution’. Now that the majority of humanity has become city dwellers what will this mean for the city, and for the people who inhabit cities?

This book seeks to explore what constitutes city and society through examining the concept of the ‘care of the self’. Michel Foucault, referring to the Epicureans, states that ‘philosophy should be considered as a permanent exercise of the care of oneself’ (Foucault 1988: 46). He quotes Epictetus’ *Discourses* to point out that man is ‘the being who was destined to care for himself. This is where the basic difference between him and other creatures resides’ (Foucault 1988: 47). ‘Man [...] must attend to himself’ because he should ‘be able to make free use of himself; and it was for this purpose that he endowed him with reason. The latter is not to be understood as a substitute for natural faculties that might be lacking; on the contrary it is the faculty that enables one to use, at the right time and in the right way, the other faculties’ (Foucault 1988: 47).

Foucault seems bemused by the eager way in which the ancients sought to look after their souls: ‘the zeal with which, like schoolboys grown old, they sought out philosophers so that they might be shown the way to happiness’ (Foucault 1988: 49). Lesley Brown argues that Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were all in agreement on major ethical questions (although he points out that Aristotle never admitted this in so many words):

All three agreed that the highest good for human beings is happiness, and that a rational choice of life will be one directed to one’s own happiness. Only a life in which one cultivates the traditional virtues (justice, temperance, courage, and practical wisdom) will be a happy life (Brown 2009: ix).

Cicero’s abiding concern was, according to Raphael Woolf, ‘the question of how philosophy can act as a force for good in the wider world’ (Woolf 2015: 3).

Cicero is the point of departure for the exploration of what constitutes ‘the good life’ in Chapter 1, but before we go into that we must also note that Woolf tells us that ‘[t]he notion that there are, or ever were, a fixed set of rules or positions that could save us from disaster, if only we applied them consistently, is the great myth that [Cicero’s] *On Duties* attempts to debunk’ (Woolf 2015: 200). This is exactly what Immanuel Kant is getting at when he says ‘*sapere aude!*’ (‘dare to know!’; also loosely translated as ‘dare to think for yourself!’)—something that is also explored by Karan August in Chapter 4, ‘Elective Spaces: Creating Space to Care’.

This thinking for oneself, with the aim of caring for oneself, was an important departure for humanity. It separated ethics from the domain of received religion. And, interestingly, it happened at roughly the same time in ancient Greece and China, i.e., roughly the fifth century BCE. Charles Murray identifies one of the key achievements of this departure as ‘a radical expansion of the way humans could think about what was true and not true’ (Murray 2004: 226). He also emphasizes another issue: that a new ‘cognitive tool was the idea that right behavior *could* be thought about, and must be thought about. By trying to understand the meaning of virtue independently of gods and kings’ (Murray 2004: 227, italics in original). This has had, as he correctly points out, ‘consequences [that] would cascade down the centuries’ (Murray: 227). It is this cascade that we are attempting to explore in this book.

Murray tells us that Aristotle evoked a concept (common also to Plato and other Greek thinkers) that ‘every object and creature has an end and an excellence’ (Murray 2004: 416). He gives the example of the end of an eye being sight, while its excellence is clear vision (Murray 2004: 416).

What is interesting about Murray’s investigations into human achievement is its global scope. He looks at China to see that although the ‘dominating topics of Confucianism’ was that man was ‘a social being and the nature of a rightly ordered society’, he sees ‘links between Aristotle’s ethics and subsequent political theory’ as being valuable (Murray 2004: 228). Murray thinks that ‘[i]f a culture has a coherent, well-articulated sense of what constitutes excellence in human-ness—[that is] constitutes the ideal of human flourishing’ (Murray 2004: 417), which is an idea we will return to in the Afterword.

This book, like Murray’s, also looks at East and West in its exploration of city and society and the role of the care of the self. It is intended to be Volume I of a two-volume set based on two conferences held at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden in the Netherlands in the springs of 2016 and 2017.

These twelve papers examine practices of the care of the self that are both ancient and modern. Some of them are of a purely theoretical nature,

while others are more practical (although almost all are informed by some degree of theory). Some look at philosophy, others at history, but all have the aim of helping us reflect on real-world issues, to understand challenges, and to help us find ways of dealing with them.

Cities, once built, shape the generations growing up within them. These generations of people, in turn, alter the built environment to meet their new needs—altering it for the next generation, and so on. A healthy city should enjoy a symbiotic and evolutionary relationship with those who inhabit it; a healthy city should embrace change. How best to achieve that change and to make it beneficial can best be determined by a proper examination of the elements that go into the make-up of a city and the society that inhabits it, as well as making use of the potentially helpful concept of the care of the self.

The papers

This book begins with my chapter called ‘Citizenship and the Good Life’. Intended as a scene-setting for the rest of the book, it investigates the concept of the good life and its relevance for citizenship. Beginning with the writings of Cicero, which stressed political engagement, these are then compared with the non-engagement of Epicureanism, in which living an obscure life (*lathe biosas* λάθε βιώσας) was seen as the surest way of achieving tranquillity (*ataraxia* ἀταραξία). To properly explore these ideas I found I was obliged, in the best Foucauldian tradition, to trace their genealogy back to the origins that Charles Murray has identified: i.e., ancient Greece in the fifth century BCE, where Plato was concerned with how to conduct the good life and asked ‘What is good?’ He tried to answer this by positing ideals that were, frankly, unattainable. Aristotle, on the other hand, thought that humans could indeed lead a good life, and sought ways to find out *how* this could be achieved, thereby formulating his famous ‘doctrine of the mean’. The chapter ends with a brief look at Confucius, particularly his concept of the ‘gentleman’ (*junzi* 君子). Chinese thinking on these issues seems to have been much clearer than those in the West from the very beginning. This was not only because of the power of Confucius’ thinking but also reflected the different type of society in China at the time. The exploration of these differences between East and West was one of this research endeavour’s main objectives, something that is explored in impressive detail in Chapter 2, ‘Space of the Prudent Self’, by Li Shiqiao. However, Chapter 1 was never intended as a rigorous comparison of East and West. The reason Confucius is introduced so briefly at the end of the chapter is because his concept of

the *junzi* resonates so strongly with that of Cicero's active citizen and with Aristotle's concept of *eudaimonia* (εὐδαιμονία—often translated into English as 'happiness' but perhaps better thought of as 'flourishing'). The concept of 'flourishing' is something I return to in the Afterword, but the discussion in Chapter 1 posits that perhaps the most useful lesson we can draw from the ancients, whether from the East or West, is their pragmatism. These thinkers were all studying the good life from a practical standpoint because they understand that human beings are basically 'political animals' (*zoon politikon*, ζῷον πολιτικόν), and therefore the good life is a politically engaged one, an active one, full of social contact. Good citizens have to cultivate this political and social engagement if they want to enjoy a fulfilled existence.

Chapter 2, 'Spaces of the Prudent Self', by Li Shiqiao, seeks to understand some of the spatial features of the city that stem from the care of the self, a notion that is constructed differently in China than in the Greco-Roman-derived conception of the West. He argues that academic studies of Chinese (and Asian) cities have been reconstituted through Western discourses of urban theory that inherently stem from Western experiences of the city. While these studies do construct a knowledge of the Chinese city, they also manage to dislocate it from its own intellectual settings, leading to value judgements of urban spaces in which Chinese cities are seen as falling short of an ideal, or are framed as romanticized alternatives to it.

Li's chapter is followed by 'The Biopolitics of Sexuality and the Hypothesis of an Erotic Art: Foucault and Psychoanalysis' by Luiz Paulo Leitão Martins which discusses the philosopher's interpretation of the biopolitics of power with regard to the device of sexuality in Western society and considers the existence of an erotic art (*ars erotica*) as both detached from the scientific model of knowledge and truth and related to the use of pleasure and the practice of the care of the self.

Chapter 4, 'Elective Spaces: Creating Space to Care' by Karan August, suggests that some spaces afford better opportunities for the practices of care than others. She calls these 'elective space' and poses the question: What qualities of material space can facilitate one to elect to care for the self? Her chapter also focuses specifically on the role of architecture in motivating the desire to create such spaces of care, a nice example of how theoretical considerations can be bent to practical ends, thereby also increasing their 'excellence'.

We return to Chinese philosophy with Chapter 5 in Massimiliano Laceratos's 'Interpreting *Dao* (道) between "Way-making" and "*Be-wägen*"', which is part of his wider research into Daoism in general, and the *Daodejing* (道德經) in particular, with the ambition of establishing a philosophy of

comparison. He argues that philosophy should always try to proceed through comparisons, both with theoretical hypotheses and methodological *praxis* (πραξις), and that these two aspects should be conceived as a singular and yet multifarious movement of thought. This chapter considers the concept of *dao* by analysing some of its common—and misleading—translations into English. It also compares the concepts of ‘way-making’ and *be-wëgen* in Ames and Hall and in Heidegger to propose a different approach.

Chapter 6, ‘Constructing Each Other: Contemporary Travel of Urban-Design Ideas between China and the West’ by Katharina M. Borgmann and Deirdre Sneep, examines the construction of images of the self and the Other between the West (i.e., Western Europe) and China through the exchange of ideas about urban design and urban living that contributes to a better understanding of how these reflect and shape the relations between both urban design and living, and how these are articulated in Asia and the West. This is followed by Chapter 7, ‘A Tale of Two Courts: The Interactions of the Dutch and Chinese Political Elites with their Cities’ by Ian R. Lewis, which also takes a comparative approach to examine two very different government enclaves in the Netherlands and China to show how the political elites of two very different countries construct and use city space.

Chapter 8, ‘Urban Acupuncture: Care and Ideology in the Writing of the City in Eleventh-Century China’ by Christian de Pee, looks at the literati’s descriptions of urban space in eleventh-century China to show both how they sought to discern a universal, moral pattern in apparent chaos and, surprisingly (given the traditional Confucian disdain for trade), how important commerce was considered in China at the time. Seen as conforming to a natural pattern, commerce helped make sense of a city’s functioning, much like a living organism. This unusual view was short-lived, however, and by the end of the century had ended in the exile and retirement of the literati, who began once again to seek to establish moral order through the family and local community rather than throughout the empire. This turned them back towards the countryside and away from the city.

Chapter 9, ‘The Value and Meaning of Temporality and its Relationship to Identity in Kunming City, China’ by Yun Gao and Nicholas Temple, highlights the changing relationship between this city and its modes of representation via an examination of historical transformations in which a distinctive type of mercantile space has emerged within Kunming’s city centre.

Chapter 10, ‘*Junzi* (君子), the Confucian Concept of the “Gentleman” and its Influence on South Korean Land-Use Planning’ by Klaas Kresse, explores the relationship between philosophical ideals and urban expression in the series of developmental steps undertaken in Seoul starting with the Park

regime in the 1960s. Kresse cleverly shows that, ironically, Westernization in Korea has led to a re-emergence of ancient Confucian practices, especially with regard to the provision of education.

Moving to Japan, Chapter 11, 'Home Within Movement: The Japanese concept of *Ma* (間): Sensing Space-time Intensity in Aesthetics of Movement' by Renske Maria van Dam, examines how social interactions based on family relations, work, or lifestyle are key to the experience of feeling at home. In Japan, this is conceptualized as *Ma* (translated as 'gap' or 'interval'), which describes the 'pregnant nothingness' within which the contemporary experience of home resonates. This is an example of how an ancient concept can have the power, potentially, to effect change in the modern-day Eurocentric 'philosophy of difference', and inspires us to look at modern urban environments from a fresh perspective, possibly even seeing them as a potential 'fifth dimension' for architecture.

Finally, Chapter 12, 'The Concept of "Home": The Javanese Creative Interpretation of *Omah Bhetari Sri*: A Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity' by Sri Teddy Rusdy, Brandon Cahyadhuha, and Hastangka, describes the Javanese concept of home as a symbolic unity: both a symbol of status and a practical thing. They engage in a detailed examination of one particular Javanese house type in order to illustrate the concept of *omah bhetari sri* (the spirit of the home), and posit that it is an example of an unbroken tradition that understands not only the spaces of the house but also its place in the wider cosmic system.

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1. Citizenship and the Good Life

Gregory Bracken

Abstract

This chapter examines the concepts of citizenship and the good life as they were understood in the ancient world, both East and West. It begins with the writings of Cicero, which stress political engagement, and compares them with the non-engagement of Epicureanism, in which living *lathe biosas* (λάθε βιώσας, 'the obscure life') was seen as the surest way to achieve *ataraxia* (ἀταραξία, 'tranquillity'). It then examines Plato's and Aristotle's writings. Plato was concerned with how to conduct the good life, but asked 'what is good?' He tried to answer this by positing ideals that are too unattainable. Aristotle, on the other hand, thought that humans could indeed lead a good life and sought *how* this could be achieved, formulating his famous 'doctrine of the mean'. The chapter ends with a brief look at Confucius, particularly his concept of the *junzi* (君子, 'gentleman'). One thing all of these philosophers had in common was their pragmatism. They were all studying the good life from a practical standpoint, because they understand that the human being is basically a *zoon politikon* (ζῷον πολιτικόν, 'political animal') and therefore the good life is politically engaged, active, and full of social contact. Good citizens have to cultivate this political and social engagement if they want to enjoy a fulfilled existence and lead a good life.

Keywords: philosophy, citizenship, *polis* (πόλις), good life, *junzi* (君子, 'gentleman')

The good citizen is politically engaged. To engage, they need to lead a good life, meaning they need to cultivate themselves to enjoy a more fulfilled existence. This concept was a common one in the ancient world, in both the East and West. This chapter explores the relationship between citizenship and the good life. It focuses primarily on the West, beginning with Cicero

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in ancient Rome. It then takes a look at Epicurus before moving to Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece. The chapter ends by making a brief examination of the Chinese understanding of good citizenship as elucidated through the teachings of Confucius. While more attention is paid to the Western sources, this chapter seeks to enrich our understanding of them by examining how some of the basic concepts introduced by Eastern and Western thinkers, such as Confucius' 'gentleman' or Cicero's 'politically engaged citizen', resonate with one another. This highlighting of some of the basic underlying principles that resonate between the East and West is one of the main aims of this book.

First, let me explain that the 'good life' has nothing to do with the sort of self-help books that are currently in vogue and promise to reveal the secret of working for three weeks of the year and feature hammocks dangling on tropical beaches on their cover. Rather, the good life is an active one, full of—often political—engagement, as we shall see. My aim in this chapter is to attempt, in my own small way, what Cicero did so elegantly in late Republican Rome: to survey the thinking on citizenship and what constitutes the good life, to see what parts of it can be applied to the modern world.

The *polis* (πόλις)

Most early accounts of human progress mention hunting, agriculture, and house-building, but Sophocles does more: he introduces the idea that the rule of law, i.e., politics, is part of our toolbox for survival (Woodruff 2005: 131). Political life developed in the ancient Greek *polis* (πόλις), a term which, according to Annette Lucia Giesecke, can have a fluid range of meanings from 'stronghold' to the 'totality of town and hinterland' (2007: 5). Herodotus' *Histories* stresses the urban aspect of the *polis*, rather than its communal or political connotations. This is reinforced by Pausanias, who, according to Giesecke, also describes the *polis* in purely physical terms (Giesecke 2007: 5). Thucydides, however, sees the *polis* not as physical construct but as a community of men (a conception also found in Alcaeus and Aeschylus (Giesecke 2007: 5)). One of Giesecke's most important points is that the 'veritable underpinnings of civilization'—technology, commerce, and communication—were fostered in the *polis* (2007: 14). And, as Aristotle asserts, the *polis* may have come 'into being in order to foster life[,] but exists for the purpose of promoting good living' (Aristotle, quoted in Giesecke 2007: 34). The word 'political' can be seen as referring not simply to politics, but also to the branch of philosophy connected with the *polis*, which forms part of the larger field of ethics, or the theory of human character and behaviour.

One thing that certainly flourished in the *polis* of Athens was philosophy. Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle established frames of reference that we still use to make sense of the world today. Interestingly, this was also the time when something similar was happening in China, with Lao Zi, Confucius, and Mencius (also with Sankara in India, although this falls outside the scope of this enquiry). What unites Greek thought and Confucianism is the fact that they were both essentially secular (although Charles Murray would argue that both schools were tantamount to religion because they articulated 'a human place in the cosmos, laid out a clear understanding of the end—the good—toward which humans aim, and set exalted standards of human behavior' (2004: 456)).

In Greece, the philosophical flowering was so compressed in time and place that it constitutes, according to Murray, one of the 'enduring mysteries of human accomplishment' (2004: 223). In an Athens ravaged by plague in the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, the population of free men at the time of Socrates' execution (399 BCE) may have been as low as 21,000 (Murray 2004: 223).

Aristotle's thought (derived from Plato's) has arguably had the most profound effect on Western culture of any of the Greeks. Of course, Plato's thinking, especially with regard to the role of the state in human affairs, is far more controversial because it tends towards totalitarianism. Murray argues that Aristotle is preeminent because he understood the role of virtue in a civilized polity and this led to the idea of happiness as integral to Western society (2004: 144). The pursuit of happiness is, after all, a cornerstone of the American Constitution, something Murray sees as distinctly Aristotelian.

Cicero

Scipio said that a 'people' was not just a collection of human beings, but also an association bound by agreement regarding justice and by a community of interest (Scipio quoted in Woolf 2015: 101). The Roman people, according to Raphael Woolf, were essentially social creatures, shaped by the history and traditions of their society (2015: 6). Woolf maintains that one of the most rewarding aspects of Cicero's writing is his willingness to engage with the tensions between the ethical and political domains (2015: 6-7). The fundamental question in Cicero's *On Ends* is: What are the right goals to pursue in order to have a good life? This question begs another: What will give us the best life? (Woolf 2015: 126). To help answer these questions, Cicero examined some of the leading theories of his

day: notably Epicureanism—which proposed that pleasure was the chief good—and Stoicism—which saw virtue as not only the chief good but the *only* good.

Thomas Habinek sees Cicero's championing of legitimate government over absolutism as rooted in his optimistic view of human nature (2012: xxi). By taking the view that humans politically assemble to care for one another, Cicero provides us with not only a theory of how government should operate (at least for late Republican Rome), but also the ethical principles that underpin the proper actions to take when it does not (Habinek 2012: xxi). Cicero thinks the aim of the ideal statesman should be citizens' happiness—a life 'secure in wealth, rich in resources, abundant in renown, and honourable in its moral character' (Cicero 2008: 83).

Cicero's background

Cicero was an adherent of New Academic scepticism, and yet his work avoided the more usual sceptical denial of any possibility of knowledge by tempering it with the view that some ideas have greater credence than others, and it is therefore possible to choose between them. This echoed Socrates' desire for a critical evaluation of pre-existing views rather than an intellectually passive acceptance of them.

Cicero was also critical of the fashionable Roman Stoicism, which believed that God was just another name for the animating order of the universe and which saw reality as interconnected with this animating order to form a single, evolving cosmos. Cicero thought that this led to an understanding of human activity as predetermined and was therefore a threat to human agency. Raphael Woolf argues that one of Cicero's main motives is championing the ethical importance of individual agency (2015: 8). He also reminds us that Cicero's search for ways of fitting philosophy into Rome's social and cultural norms shows that he understood that no matter how universal a subject may claim to be, cultural activity will always be a product of its time and place (Woolf 2015: 4). Perhaps Cicero's boldest move, given the dangerous political situation at the time (which of course ultimately proved fatal for the philosopher-statesman), was his argument that philosophy did not simply have to be for the betterment of Rome; rather, it could, and should, be a source of enjoyment for the individual (Woolf 2015: 66).

Cicero composed his treatises in exile, when public life had become too dangerous for him. By the 50s BCE the Republic was in decline and problems had emerged that could no longer be solved by the rules that had

operated in the city-state. Rome was an empire and could no longer be run by what Niall Rudd calls 'a small elite of all-round amateurs' (2008: xxvi). The Roman empire's vast new territories brought problems of scale and control; its voting system was outdated and over-centralized; economic problems had begun to emerge, creating a resentful urban proletariat; and, finally, troops recruited with the promise of loot had returned home from victorious imperial campaigns loyal not to the Senate but to their generals' ambitions (Rudd 2008: xxvi).

Woolf says that it is to Cicero's credit that he 'refused to seek refuge in the seductive illusion of certainty that an unalterable past may tempt us with' (2015: 200). He argues that Cicero's philosophy, which insists on the power of the individual and the critical evaluation of circumstances to make good decisions, offered a potential way to deal with dangerous situations; that 'a well-equipped and well-intentioned individual can be the agent of change' (Woolf 2015: 200). Cicero insisted that philosophy should be applicable to the lives of the humans 'whose psychological well-being must be theory's main objective' (Woolf 2015: 202). But Woolf also points out that Cicero was interested in what role emotion should play in our lives, particularly what can afford us the happiest life (Woolf 2015: 202).

Cicero's philosophy

Cicero's work may not be profoundly original, at least not in the way his Greek predecessors' philosophies were. He himself is unlikely to have been troubled by this because he did not see the task of philosophy as the finding out of new truths, but of relating them to current circumstances; as Thomas Habinek points out, Cicero's insights are more valuable for 'having been tested in the crucible of experience' (2012: xi).

Cicero's *Republic* is not a political manifesto, yet it is practical in ways that Plato's *Republic* is not. While Plato describes a purely theoretical scenario, by focusing on a commitment to participation Cicero reveals a level of pragmatism that Plato's theory cannot hope to match. Yet Cicero's use of Platonic dialogue suggests that he wished to explore the issues, rather than simply lay down hard-and-fast rules (and, as Niall Rudd points out, the setting of the work in the second century BCE precludes any need for direct commentary on contemporary events (2008: xx)). Yet, Woolf argues, the political turmoil in Rome at the time of writing brought many of the issues relating to the potential for an individual's full flourishing in a good society into sharper focus (2015: 174). The *Republic* is, in short, an attempt by

Cicero to provide a theoretical analysis of the institutions that (in Scipio's words) made Rome 'the greatest republic' (Cicero 2008: 95).

In Book I of *The Republic*, Cicero focuses on what is honourable, which he divides into four categories. There is a certain resemblance to the four traditional cardinal virtues (wisdom, justice, courage, and temperance), but as Woolf points out, Cicero cleverly provides descriptions, rather than simply providing a list. The first is 'perception of the truth and shrewdness'; the second (among other things), 'preserving human society and rendering each person their due'; the third, 'the greatness and strength of a lofty and invincible spirit'; and the fourth, 'order and limit in everything that is said and done, in which temperance and moderation is included' (Woolf 2015: 173). Woolf sees this as Cicero's attempt to avoid an overly narrow account of these virtues. Instead, he prefers to emphasize two related aspects: 1) their practical bearing and, to a certain extent, complexity, because there is no virtue that can be purely private—humans are social animals and any appropriate action has to be weighed within its social context; and 2) humans are diverse individuals, so 'the question of what is the appropriate way to act cannot be settled without reference to the agent's own character and circumstances' (Woolf 2015: 173).

At the heart of Cicero's philosophy is the idea that the wise person is virtuous, with virtue, in this case, being perfected reason—a view that strongly resonates with the Confucian notion of the *junzi* (君子, 'gentleman'), discussed at the end of this chapter. Being susceptible to distress is incompatible with the possession of virtue (a distinct echo of Epicureanism). If we were to take one fundamental tenet from Cicero's work, it could be the injunction not to harm a fellow human being or to profit at another's expense, because both of these actions undermine the bonds of human society on which we all ultimately depend.¹

Epicureanism

Cicero's good life of political engagement contrasted sharply with the Epicurean injunction of *lathe biosas* (λάθε βιώσας, 'live the obscure life'), in which the conception of pleasure is almost entirely negative (i.e., minimize

1 It must be pointed out that one of the criticisms of Cicero's work is the fact that it ignores some of Roman society's more disturbing aspects, such as imperialism and exploitation of various kinds, including slavery (which will be mentioned again later in this chapter), and also that these discussions relate exclusively to men, since women had no role in politics in the ancient world.

the pains and fears of existence to maximize inner peace and well-being). Cicero saw Epicureanism as a sort of anti-philosophy. Following the premise that nothing is good except that which is morally good and the idea that moral goodness should be sufficient in itself to create a happy life, Cicero dismissed the notion of the possibility of a continual physical well-being on the grounds that such a thing is beyond our control. This dismissal, however, results from Cicero's (probably deliberately) too naïve reading of Epicurean philosophy. In fact, the poet Lucretius is very clear that the mere removal of hardship does not guarantee a sense of equanimity. Instead, the Epicurean ideal of *ataraxia* (ἀταραξία, 'tranquillity') can and should be achieved by embracing humanity's place in nature (Giesecke 2007: 81).

Epicureans were often deliberately misrepresented by their detractors. Portrayed as sensualists, it is this misperception of Epicureanism as high living that has warped our current understanding of the movement (it could be argued that there is a similar misperception of what constitutes the good life). In fact, Epicureans were ascetic, even puritanical. Their search for tranquillity can seem almost Buddhist, except for their clear understanding of the reality of the physical world: they were not seeking any kind of mystical nirvana (Klein 2012: 62).

The question of how to live the happiest life was fundamental to Epicureanism, but it was not the only aspect of what was in fact a fairly comprehensive philosophy. Daniel Klein claims that Epicurus made a more substantial contribution to Western thought than is generally allowed, through, for example, his stance against superstition and popular religion (Klein 2012: xiii-xiv). Epicurus was also among the first thinkers in the West to make a break with superstitious interpretations of natural phenomena (something that loomed large in Rome's religious life in Cicero's day, with its auguries and haruspices). The Epicurean school was also unusual for not only allowing but encouraging women to join (Woolf 2015: 144).

It is true that Epicureans tended to have what Woolf calls 'a quietist outlook' (2015: 117) and, in contrast with the Aristotelian view that the expression of emotion was a central part of living well, Epicureans (and indeed Stoics, albeit in a different way) regarded emotion with suspicion—particularly 'negative' emotions like anger, fear, or grief. The Aristotelian doctrine of the mean (which we will come to in a moment) proposed that virtue was feeling the right emotion in its appropriate context, neither excessively nor deficiently; for Epicureans, the ideal psychological state was *ataraxia*, which can be translated as 'tranquillity' or, more literally, 'lack of disturbance' (Woolf 2015: 201).

Epicurus regarded pleasure as the logical opposite of pain, so to avoid pain one should discipline one's appetites and curtail desires so they were

at the bare minimum for a healthy life. This could be further facilitated by withdrawing from active participation in the life of the community, preferably in the company of select friends. (Plato's Guardians would probably have preferred the life of an Epicurean to the onerous task of being rulers, but then Plato insisted that those who did not wish to be rulers probably made the best ones.) Cicero's dislike of Epicurean withdrawal led him to dismiss the movement (rather unfairly) from his analysis because he could not conceive of the virtuous life as anything other than politically engaged. This meant he also omitted the Epicurean theory of justice from his discussion.

George K. Strodach is correct in pointing out that the Epicureans' withdrawal from active concerns and the responsibilities of citizenship rendered their philosophy socially and politically immature (2012: 75), but he also stresses that they had a strong sense of a social mission to alleviate human unhappiness (which they did by debunking neurotic superstitions and religious fears, forging in effect a new religion for the intelligentsia (2012: 76)). Related to this was the Epicurean theory of atomic science, which replaced traditional superstitions with rational explanations. Strodach identifies this as one of their longest lasting contributions to Western thought, even though, as he is quick to admit, it was not science as we know it today, i.e., it was not open-ended experimental methodology, but a closed body of dogmatic truth to which nothing could be added or amended (2012: 76). In reading Epicurus' philosophy it is probably best to follow Daniel Klein's advice and think of it as life-enhancing poetry rather than testable theory (2012: xi); then we can be free to enjoy what can be usefully gleaned from it.

Both Epicurus and Lucretius thought that man's spiritual ills came from pursuing unnatural values (such as money or power). By eschewing these, one could live a life free from mental and physical pain. The positive aspect of this was known as hedonism (from the Greek for 'pleasure'). Epicurean hedonism had two basic assumptions: 1) that moral good is the same as pleasure; and 2) that moral evil is the same as pain. Hedonism judges an act as moral or immoral not by the act itself, but by the experience it produces (i.e., pleasure or pain): hence the morality of any act is ambiguous, since its value does not depend on an *a priori* character but on its psychological consequences, which are of course relative because they differ from person to person and over time.

To my mind, Epicureanism's single most important contribution to Western thought is that there can be no sensation after death. As Strodach points out, the ethical implications of this are vast because it destroys at one stroke two of mankind's greatest potential miseries: death and hell (Strodach 2012: 19).

Plato

Returning for a moment to the question of what should be considered good, investigations into this question can be traced back to fifth century BCE Athens, where Plato was concerned with how we should conduct ourselves to lead a good life. But what is good? Is it sensual pleasure? honour? the intellectual life? And should we really be motivated by the desire to maximise pleasure?

This ethical debate on whether good was pleasure, honour, or the intellectual life corresponded, according to Robin Waterfield, to bodily, external, and internal goods (2006: xv). Waterfield sees this as the beginning of ethics (as does Charles Murray, as we saw in the Introduction). Theories were developed not just to combat what other thinkers were proposing, but also as a positive attempt to explain human motivation (Murray 2004: xv). There was always a practical strain in this because, while both pleasure and honour were seen as worldly aims, those seeking something more austere and other-worldly (i.e., those who would pursue knowledge for its own sake) were tolerated only as long as they did not pursue it to excess. In other words, a gentleman should be able to hold his own at a symposium, but philosophy was not considered something appropriate to dedicate one's life to (Murray 2004: xvi).

Now that we have gone back this far, it might be instructive to take a look at the background to what was happened in Greece in this first Western golden age of philosophical enquiry. This magnificent flowering is all the more remarkable when we consider that Greece had only just emerged from a Dark Age (roughly 1150–800 BCE), when the art of writing had been lost, monumental architecture or, indeed, anything that could be classed as art was no longer produced, and people had reverted to a more or less nomadic, subsistence existence (Giesecke 2007: 3).

The eighth century BCE saw the re-introduction of an alphabet (borrowed from the Phoenicians), the organization of pan-Hellenic institutions such as the Olympic Games and the Delphic oracle, and the expansion of colonization. It also saw what is perhaps the most important feature of all: the emergence of the *polis* as a distinct form of social organization (Giesecke 2007: 3-4). As Giesecke writes, 'The Greeks' emergence from Dark Age regionalism and isolationism was marked by a new and growing social consciousness and a desire to define "what it was to be Greek"' (Giesecke 2007: 3). She explains this heightened sense of Greek confidence as dating to their victory over Persia at the beginning of the fifth century BCE. The magnitude of the threat and the sense of validation after their victory were

central to Greece's new-found self-confidence (Giesecke 2007: 67). This can be seen as the catalyst for Athens' stunning intellectual and artistic achievements later in the century (Giesecke 2007: 71). According to Giesecke, this victory propelled Athens to within striking distance of the Homeric political ideal (Giesecke 2007: 71) and enabled the promotion of an ideal Hellenic world governed by self-restraint, nobility, and equity (Giesecke 2007: 77-78).

In the *Symposium*, Plato states that the finest type of wisdom 'is that connected with the organization of cities and households, which is called moderation and justice' (Plato 2005: 58). Desmond Lee (in his Introduction to the *Republic*) sees the Greeks as distinguishing less sharply between ethics and politics because the political community in the *polis* was smaller and more intimate (1987: xxxi). The ancient Greeks saw the law of the state as the source for all standards of human life—which meant that the virtue of the individual was the same as that of the citizen (Lee 1987: xxxi).

Plato and his contemporaries were studying the good life from a practical standpoint, which, according to Robin Waterfield, makes a work like *Philebus* an ethical rather than meta-ethical work, and resonates with Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*, where Aristotle states, 'we are studying not to know what goodness is, but how to become good men' (Aristotle quoted in Waterfield 2006: xv).

The question of whether virtue can be taught is one that drives all of these philosophers' investigations. Why are some people more proficient than others? Why do some make more of a success of life? And is this ability to cultivate success something we can learn?

The Academy

Plato established his Academy around 386 BCE. It was intended to be a school for statesmen, a training ground for a new type of politician. Plato wanted to avoid the fashionable studies in rhetoric offered by his rivals such as Isocrates and the Sophists. He saw rhetoric as superficial because it gave the means to persuade without guarding against its abuses. Plato wanted his statesman to know *how* a society should be run, and then let the leaders do the persuading (Lee 1987: xix).

Plato's view was that philosophy could only come as a product of contact between minds. In W.K.C. Guthrie's effective analogy, this was like striking sparks from steel with flint (1965: 10). This is what Plato termed 'dialectic'

(from the Greek ‘to converse’). The purpose of these dialectical conversations was to find out ‘what each thing is’: hence the word came to mean ‘the discovery and knowledge of the truth about things’, and this was to be the province of the philosopher (Waterfield 2006: xxxi).

Above all, an educator should remember that the aim was not to ‘put into the mind knowledge that was not there before’ (although that may occur, within limits) but to turn the mind’s eye to the light so that it can see for itself. In other words, to facilitate students to think for themselves. This, according to Desmond Lee, is ‘perhaps the best-known passage on education in the *Republic*, because of the importance and truth of the principle which it states’ (1987: xxxvii).

The *Republic*

Plato is thought to have written the *Republic* in the 380s and/or 370s BCE. It is considered a statement of the Academy’s aims in that it describes a society governed by philosopher-rulers. Lee states that ‘Plato had decided that the world’s ills would not be cured till philosophers ruled; the education of philosophers therefore becomes the most important of political activities’ (1987: xxxi). Trevor J. Saunders points out that the ‘essential features of such a state are that the few who really know the absolute moral standards rule the many who do not, and that such control is willingly exercised and willingly accepted’ (2004: xxx). Saunders sees the *Republic* as an ‘extreme statement of Plato’s central ideas about moral and political problems’ in that ‘he gives us not so much the description of a particular utopia as an analysis of those general features of society that will ensure its moral salvation’ (Lee 1987: xxx). Plato is less concerned with the detailed structure of society—its laws and regulations—because, according to Saunders, ‘he assumes that such details can be formulated easily enough by anyone with knowledge of the eternal moral verities’ (Lee 1987: xxx).

Lee, in his Introduction to the *Republic*, recommends that ‘[i]t is better therefore to treat it as a statement of principles whose application would vary with time and place and circumstance’ (1987: xxi). The *Republic* is a book about ethics, education, and philosophy as much as it is about politics (Lee 1987: xxxii), and we would do well to follow Lee’s advice to ‘respect Plato’s vision, but not forget its dangers’ (Lee 1987: xlvi).

The title *Republic* is somewhat misleading, leading an uninitiated reader into thinking that Plato was writing about a particular form of government:

a 'republic' in the modern sense. In fact, the word in Greek can also mean 'constitution' or 'society' (much like the later Latin *res publica*). Plato was, in fact, writing about society, or the state, rather than any specific form of governance.

One of Plato's main concerns in the *Republic* is the selection of rulers based on their competence for the job, not on wealth or rhetorical persuasiveness. Rulers are chosen on their merits. There is no question of democratic elections because Plato thought these as bad as choosing leaders based on wealth. What he proposed was, in fact, very similar to the Chinese civil-service examinations, which selected the brightest minds of each generation to rule the state as mandarins (something we shall see in the discussion of Confucianism). The problem with Plato's system, at least according to Desmond Lee, is not that it trusts the common man too little, but that it trusts the rulers too much (1987: xlix).

There are some interesting parallels between Plato's *Republic* and Cicero's work (including the regrettable tendency to countenance behaviour that would be unthinkable today, such as slavery and infanticide). Plato's state should possess four cardinal virtues: wisdom, courage, discipline, and justice. Desmond Lee points out that Plato does not call these 'virtues', and uses the more neutral 'qualities' in his translation (Lee in Plato 1987: footnote on page 138). In these virtues or qualities, wisdom comes from the knowledge possessed by the Rulers; courage is required of the Auxiliaries; self-discipline comes from harmony between all three social classes (and their common agreement on who should rule); and finally, justice is the one overriding principle, where people do the job they are most naturally suited to do (Lee 1987: 137).²

One of the reasons the *Republic* has had such a lasting legacy is not only because it elucidates Plato's thinking in such an organized manner, but because it also contains one of Western philosophy's most dazzling and enduring analogies: that of the Cave (Part Seven: 'The Philosopher Ruler').

2 Here it might be useful to say a little about the translation of these terms. 'Courage' has much the same meaning as its Greek original, but for Plato there are overtones of *thumos* (Θυμός, 'spiritedness'; it can also mean the human desire for recognition). 'Self-discipline' originally meant 'sound sense' and had two meanings in ordinary usage: 'prudence', i.e., good sense (see Li, this volume) and 'temperance', or moderation, neither of which is particularly apposite today. 'Good' itself is normally translated as *agathos* (ἀγαθός), and 'excellence' as *arete* (ἀρετή), but Lee uses 'goodness' for *arete* because it is the main characteristic of the good (*agathos*) man. Finally, the common Greek word for 'happy' (*eudaimon*, εὐδαιμον) has different overtones in English today, in that it implies a permanent condition of life or a disposition of character rather than simply a state of mind or feeling.

Desmond Lee calls this a graphic presentation of the truths presented in the earlier analogy of the Line and identifies the two states of mind referred to in the Line as 'belief' and 'illusion' (1987: 255). In these analogies (which should also be read together with the Sun), we are shown the ascent of the ruler's mind from illusion to pure philosophy, and the difficulties associated with this progress. Once the philosopher-ruler has achieved the supreme vision, he is required to return to the cave and serve his fellows as ruler (and his unwillingness to do this is, as we saw earlier, one of his chief qualifications).³

The Laws

The *Laws* is thought to be Plato's last work, left unrevised at his death in 347 BCE. It lacks the dramatic power of some of his earlier dialogues, probably because, as Trevor J. Saunders has pointed out, much of it resembles a lecture by the Athenian rather than a proper dialogue, and whatever conversation there is tends to be wooden (2004: xliii). The *Laws* describes in detail a Utopian settlement called Magnesia to be founded on Crete. It is intended to be a small agricultural state governed by an unalterable code of laws and isolated from almost all contact with the rest of the world (note how Plato took good care to locate it well away from the sea, beside which Greek colonies were usually to be found). The main conviction behind this project is Plato's idea that with the right amount of effort it is possible to achieve a society that is excellent and which does not have to be changed (2004: xxiii).

Some believed that Plato's *Republic* was an actual proposal for an ideal state, even suggesting that Plato had been hoping to realise this ideal in the Greek colony of Syracuse and that the failure to do so led him to write the *Laws* as a sort of a second-best alternative. Saunders has argued against this by saying that Plato did not change his political views in any major way between writing the *Republic* and the *Laws*; instead, the two dialogues should be seen as 'opposite sides of the same coin' (2004: xviii-xix).

Saunders admits that anyone who reads the *Laws* after the *Republic* may have 'difficulty in believing that the same person wrote both' (2004: xxxii), and because we feel that realism must come after idealism (especially if idealism has been disappointed), we may be forgiven for seeing

3 It would be tempting to replace the shadows flickering on the cave walls with today's all-encompassing social-media-driven Internet.

the *Republic* as some kind of unattainable ideal abandoned in favour of something more realistic. Saunders demolishes this theory by pointing out that ‘to suppose that Plato ever thought that the *Republic* was attainable would be to suppose him capable not merely of optimism or idealism but of sheer political naïveté’ and that ‘this charmingly simple account of the development of Plato’s political theory really will not do, because it confuses *attainable* ideals with *unattainable* ideals’ (2004: xxxiii, italics in original).

It makes much better sense, according to Saunders, to ‘think of the *Republic* as an extreme statement designed to shock’ (2004: xxxiii). He even goes so far as to suggest that ‘Plato could perfectly well have written the *Laws* when he wrote the *Republic* and the *Republic* when he wrote the *Laws*, for they are the opposite sides of the same coin. The *Republic* presents merely the theoretical ideal, and—a point which is often ignored—explicitly and emphatically allows for some diminution in rigour if it were to be put into practice. The *Laws* describes, in effect, the *Republic* modified and realized in the conditions of this world’ (Saunders 2004: xxxiii).

Christopher Bobonich argues that the differences between the *Republic* and the *Laws* developed out of changes in Plato’s view of moral psychology, and this led to his taking a ‘much more optimistic view of the moral and political capacities of ordinary people’ (Bobonich, quoted in Stalley 2004: xix). Whatever change of heart Plato may or may not have had throughout his career, Saunders goes to the crux of the problem when he states that Plato assumes politics to be an exact science (2004: xxxix). The problem with this view is that ‘our fellow-men often display an unaccountable reluctance to be moulded. Should we then *force* them to conform? After all, it will surely be for their own good’ (Saunders 2004: xxiv, italics in original). Of course, the idea that one could force people to be free was one of the fundamental flaws of later Enlightenment thinking.

The closing topic of the *Laws* is ‘Virtue and Happiness’, a fascinating attempt by Plato to show that ‘the virtuous life offers us the maximum pleasure, whereas vice offers the maximum pain, so that what we really want is virtue (assuming, of course, that we all wish to maximise our pleasures); if we do wrong it must be because we cannot control ourselves or act in ignorance of the truth’ (Plato 2004: 142). As Saunders points out, the thesis the Athenian is trying to refute is ‘the common one that “Vice may be vice but I *enjoy* it.” The “proof” depends on our agreeing (and of course Cleinias and Megillus are never given the chance not to) that vice involves extremes of emotion, and extremes are more painful than pleasurable’

(Plato 2004: 142). Whatever their faults as texts, one thing is certain about both the *Republic* and the *Laws*: ‘one should not be read without the other’ (Saunders 2004: xxxiii).⁴

Aristotle

Trevor J. Saunders sees Plato’s work as exhibiting a ‘kind of cosmic pessimism’ and is ‘therefore penetrated by the sad conviction that moral and political conduct is always in some sense second-rate: the ruler should no doubt strive to produce the best possible conduct and institutions in his state, but perfection will elude him always’ (1992: 36). Aristotle, on the other hand, thinks that men ‘can attain some measure of happiness even when they fail to live fully in accordance with their nature; but it would be only *in so far* as they live thus that they would be happy’ (Aristotle 2011: 37, italics in original). So man’s happiness is determined by his nature. Aristotle’s *Politics* is an investigation into how it is possible to live the good life, but it also seeks to discover *how* this happiness may be attained.

Anthony Kenny identifies Aristotle’s work as systematic in a way that Plato’s was not. Plato flits from topic to topic, whereas the ‘very notion of a discipline, in the modern academic sense, was an invention of Aristotle’ (Kenny 2011: ix). All of Aristotle’s ethical treatises examine the notion of *eudaimonia* (εὐδαιμονία, ‘happiness’) The aptly named *Eudamian Ethics* begins with the questions of what is a good life, and how it is to be acquired (Aristotle 2011: 3). Kenny points out that the answer to the second question depends very much on the answer to the first: in other words, what makes life worth living? (2011: xii-xiii).

If life is to be worth living, it must be for something that is an end in itself. Aristotle narrows this ‘something’ to three possibilities: pleasure, virtuous action, and wisdom. Everyone can see their happiness as linked to one of three kinds of lifestyles: the voluptuary, the political, or the philosophical. This triad, according to Kenny, provides the key to Aristotle’s ethical enquiries; the *Eudemian Ethics* contains a detailed analysis of the concepts

4 Note: Neoplatonism, the development of Platonic philosophy that began with Plotinus (204–270 CE) and ended with the closing of the Platonic Academy by the Emperor Justinian (529 CE), falls outside the scope of this chapter. Despite its importance to later Renaissance Humanism, Neoplatonism’s syncretism, which resulted from its incorporation of Near Eastern influences that allowed it to take on semi-mystical overtones, and which in turn spawned Gnosticism and the Hermetic tradition, strays too far from the purely pragmatic concepts under investigation here. See also footnote 7 in *Lacertosa*, this volume.

of pleasure, virtue, and wisdom so that Aristotle's account of happiness can claim to incorporate all three (2011: xiii).

Aristotle also develops his famous 'doctrine of the mean' by defining moral virtue in the *Nicomachean Ethics* as 'a state of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean, i.e. the mean relative to us, this being determined by reason, and by that reason by which the man of practical wisdom would determine it' (Brown 2009: xiv). Moral virtue will therefore have acquired a state of character that disposes it to feeling and acting appropriately. But, as Lesley Brown warns us, we must not think of this as 'moderation in everything': the doctrine of the mean requires responses and feelings that are appropriate and proportional (Brown 2009: xiv). Any action that expresses moral virtue will avoid excess or defect, as Kenny reminds us in his reading of the *Eudemian Ethics* (2011: xviii).

Richard Sennett writes that Aristotle was 'perhaps the first Western philosopher to worry about repressive unity' because '[h]e thought of the city as a *synoikismos* [συνοικισμός], a coming together of people from diverse family tribes—each *oikos* [οἶκος] having its own history, allegiances, property, family gods', and therefore 'the city thus obliges people to think about and deal with others who have different loyalties' (2013: 4). Aristotle's investigations were indeed mainly concerned with the organs of government within different kinds of government constitutions. T.A. Sinclair states that Aristotle had in mind 'all aspects of life in humane society, all that contributes to the good life' (1992: 25). Aristotle saw the state as the supreme form of human association, and although he recognized that it was not the only one, he has little to say about other forms (with the exception of the household and family, where relationships of master/slave, husband/wife, and parent/child were, according to Sinclair (1992: 93), of greater importance than economics for Aristotle from a moral point of view). (This also resonates interestingly with Confucianism's five relationships, as we will see shortly.) Aristotle begins by examining *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία, 'household management'), which he considers a sort of state-management on a smaller scale (again an echoing of Confucianism). Sinclair notes that Aristotle's views on slavery are problematic, but given Greek society at the time it was an institution he could not afford to reject (and the arguments he used to defend it were still being used in the nineteenth century—with the race issue seeming to give an 'outward manifestation of nature's supposed intention that Aristotle had looked for in vain' (in Book I, Chapter v) (Sinclair 1992: 21)).

Man is a *zoon politikon* (ζῷον πολιτικόν, 'political animal'), capable of, and designed by nature for, life in the *polis*. Just as we need to understand

that there was no separation of ethics and politics in the ancient world, we must also bear in mind that the *polis* ('city-state'), was not the same as the modern nation-state. In discussing Aristotle's *Politics*, Sinclair points out two salient points about the ancient Greek *polis*: 1) its unity; and 2) its limited membership (1992: 24). Only citizens could form part of the *polis*, and much of their daily lives was occupied with exercising its rights and privileges. As Sinclair says, 'the state embraced a much smaller proportion of the population but a much larger share in the daily lives of each' (1992: 24).

The question of how to define a citizen is crucial to Aristotle and is dealt with at length in Book III of *Politics*. Who rules whom, and with what justification, are central questions in his political theory. He argues that a good citizen can only be good in the 'best' state, and only then when he is ruling it (Aristotle 1992: 177). This relates to moral virtue because it is understood as something not merely spiritual or mental, but also relating to activity and function (Aristotle 1992: 93). According to Sinclair, when a young Athenian male was educated in the laws of his country, it did not only mean a legal education, but also a moral and social one (1992: 26).

The Greek word *politeia* (πολιτεία, usually translated as 'constitution') was a legally embodied ethical code that encompassed the entire framework of the *polis*'s social and political systems, and was also the moral standards by which citizens were expected to live. Sinclair allows that it may seem odd to put the citizen ahead of the state, but we need to remember that to say 'a citizen is a member of a state' involves asking 'what constitutes membership of the state?' This is also where Sinclair reminds us of Aristotle's scientific and biological outlook, which seems to see the citizen as some sort of species, with markers that allow for recognition (1992: 167-168).

Aristotle insists that habituation, not teaching, is the route to moral virtue. In other words, we must, as Lesly Brown tells us, 'practise doing good actions, not just read about virtue' (Brown 2009: xiii)—although he also reminds us that 'reason too has a role' (2009: xiii). For Sinclair, the solution to Aristotle's problem of what makes a citizen a good one is the contribution that his 'virtue' makes to the constitution; because there are different kinds of constitution, this 'virtue' may vary. It cannot be the same as some sort of 'perfect' virtue attaining to the good man (Sinclair 1992: 177). When a good man is ruling well (i.e., exercising wisdom), he is exercising 'perfect' virtue. Part of the virtue of the good citizen is also to be ruled well, but because this does not require wisdom it is less praiseworthy: wisdom, according to Aristotle, differs according to whether it is exercised by the

ruler or the ruled (Aristotle 1992: 177-178).⁵ This echoes, to a certain extent, the Confucian difference between the *junzi* (君子, 'cultivated gentleman') and the *xiaoren* (小人, 'petty person').

This active ruling resonates with Aristotle's fundamental conviction that happiness is a form of activity. Happiness is the complete and perfect use of all our faculties under the guidance of virtue; hence the best constitution, in order to produce happiness, must consist of and be operated by men who are virtuous (and therefore *spoudaioi* (σπουδαίος, 'sound')) (Aristotle 1992: 427). Sinclair also states that because activity is what man is made for, he cannot be happy if not active (1992: 399). Kenny notes that if happiness consists in 'the exercise of the highest form of virtue, and if the unimpeded exercise of a virtue constitutes a pleasure, then happiness and that pleasure are one and the same thing' (2011: xxiii). He also tells us that pleasure is not good or bad in itself, but that the pleasure proper to good activities is good and that to bad activities is bad (Kenny 2011: xxiii).

The ideal of happiness outlined in the *Eudemian Ethics* can therefore be seen as combining the features of the three different kinds of endeavour: philosophy, politics, and pleasure-seeking. Because Aristotle assigns roles to contemplation, moral virtues, and pleasure, the happy man may well value contemplation above all else, but part of his happiness *must* lie in the exercise of political virtues and the enjoyment (in moderation) of human pleasures (Aristotle 1992: xxiv). In this way, it could be argued that pleasure is indeed the best of all human goals.

Philosophy in China

One of the aims of this chapter is to compare different philosophies to try and understand what constitutes good citizenship and the good life. This has been done to see if we can uncover some basic concepts that underpin the different philosophical approaches. So far we have looked at Western philosophers, starting with Cicero and following a trail that led through Epicurus to Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. At about the same time as these last-named thinkers were working in Athens, there was a philosopher working in China, Confucius, whose work is particularly relevant to this chapter's inquiries. Because one of the chapter's main

5 Because Aristotle defines the citizen as someone who 'participates in giving judgement and holding office' (Aristotle 1992: 168), it is sobering to think that most of us would not be classed as citizens at all because we rely on representatives to run our public affairs for us.

aims, and indeed one of the book's, is to compare and contrast different approaches from the East and West, it might be instructive to turn our attention Eastwards to see what China has to say about citizenship and the good life.

Whereas in the West one has to look at the 'holy trinity' of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, in China there is one philosopher who stands head and shoulders above all others: Confucius. Introducing Confucius at this late stage of this chapter is done to compare the core concept of citizenship, not to treat of Chinese philosophy in detail. While the West has been given more attention here, that was only because I had to map out certain genealogical relationships between the different philosophers, who each subtly developed the thinking of his predecessors. This took some time, and it could be argued that it reflects the more dialectical Western approach. In the East the approach is different; this is reflected in the fact that their philosophers did not engage in dialectics. This can be seen from the fact that one of the canonical texts of Confucianism is entitled the *Analects*—the words of a sage to his disciples, rather than a record of vigorously debated topics. But first, by way of introduction, let us take a quick look at Chinese philosophy as a preface to Confucius.

Philosophical studies in China tend to be either historical or comparative. The former focus on the philological analysis of texts, while the latter attempt to identify the concepts underlying them. Philosophy in China is generally divided into three main periods: 1) the classical (sixth to second century BCE); 2) the introduction and increasing ascendancy of Buddhism (first to tenth century CE); and 3) the renaissance of Neoconfucianism (from the eleventh to sixteenth century CE, after which it settled into an increasingly rigid state orthodoxy). The classical period saw the introduction of forceful and original concepts of morality. This was a time of profound and prolonged social and political crisis, with the collapse of the Chou Dynasty and the start of the Warring States Period (433–221 BCE). J.M. Roberts sees this as the impetus for the burst of speculation about government and ethics that began to flourish around this time. This was the era of the Hundred Schools, when wandering scholars (much like the Greek Sophists) moved from patron to patron, expounding upon their own teachings (Roberts 1987: 150). Two of the major schools to emerge during this period were Confucianism and Daoism. Confucianism was based on the work of Confucius, particularly the *Analects* (*Lun Yu*, 論語), which sought to cultivate ethical conduct based on the concepts of benevolence and righteousness. It was later philosophers Mencius and Xunzi who then consolidated Confucius' position as China's greatest sage. Mencius constructed a system of ethics on the idea that human

nature was essentially good, while Xunzi did so with the understanding that man was essentially wicked.

Daoism is slightly older than Confucianism. Its central text is Laozi's *The Way and Its Power* (*Daodejing*, 道德經), which is investigated by Masimiliano Lacertosa in Chapter 5 of this volume. Zhuangzi later expanded Laozi's notion of the *dao* to embrace freedom and spontaneity and to call for man to live in harmony with all beings. There were other schools in the classical period, as well as other thinkers, such as Mozi, the Legalists, the Logicians, the Yin Yang school, etc. However, Confucianism and Daoism still rank as two of the three most influential Chinese philosophies or religions.

The third is Buddhism, which came to China from India around the first century CE. Its introduction marked the start of China's second philosophical period, and its influence could be felt throughout the whole of Chinese society by the fifth century, especially in the north. By the seventh century it had become the region's third main philosophy/religion. Buddhism's overt religious expression also seems to have been the catalyst for a more colourful phase of Daoist worship, whereas Daoism's somewhat slippery thinking clearly had an influence on later Buddhism's Chan (Zen) thinking.

China's third philosophical period, from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, saw the emergence of Neoconfucianism, a formidable synthesis of insights from Confucianism, Daoism, Mohism (a philosophical, social, and religious movement which flourished during the Warring States era (479–221 BCE), and Buddhism.

It can be hard to draw the line between philosophy and religion in China because philosophies may take on religious overtones, while, conversely, religions tend to be quite philosophical—a stark contrast to the faith-based belief systems of the West. China's philosophers were concerned with questions of ethics rather than divine revelation; they were interested in practical considerations of how to live, rather than trying to store up benefits for an afterlife. They primarily saw philosophy as having practical applications, which could be both political and social. If one were to sum them up, philosophy in China can be described as primarily concerned with determining how best to live, and how best to govern.

It was the love of knowledge and the search for the best way to live that led to the invention of philosophy in China, according to Hyun Höchsmann. China has one of the world's oldest civilizations, developing more than four millennia ago (2004: 2). China's moral, aesthetic, and political ideal is harmony (of the individual, the family, and the state), and its philosophical thought was both imbued with high moral idealism and at the same time

vigorously practical, meant to provide effective ethical principles for both private and public life (Höchsmann 2004: Preface, n.p.).

China's most influential philosopher was and remains Confucius, whose teachings have had a huge influence on public life in China, Japan, and Korea until the present day (see Chapter 10, this volume). While Confucius had a great respect for the wisdom of the past, he did not accept it uncritically. Like Cicero, he thought the way to make progress was to reflect on what had been handed down and use it in practical ways. According to D.C. Lau, behind Confucius' pursuit of the ideal moral character lay an unspoken (and therefore unquestioned) assumption that the only purpose man can have is to become as good as possible (1979: 12). This is something that has to be pursued for its own sake and with complete indifference to success or failure. Confucius' version of Aristotle's *politikon zoon* is the *junzi* (君子, 'gentleman'): the man of moral excellence, who should be in a position of authority. And, like Cicero—who provided both theories for how government should be properly run, and also ethical principles for how to act when it was not—Confucius believed that being moral was not something to be pursued for the sake of a reward, but for its own sake.

Confucius

Confucius was born in the sixth century BCE, a time when China's imperial rule was breaking down and ancient ideals were in decline. He salvaged these by reformulating and systematically reordering them, but after years of failing to convince the feudal rulers to convert to his way of thinking he retired to his birthplace of Lu, where he spent the rest of his life teaching disciples. Höchsmann sees Confucius' humility as akin to that of Socrates: Confucius believed he was a transmitter, not an originator, of knowledge (2004: 23). In fact, the Socratic and Confucian methods are similar because both are, initially, quite destructive (of received opinion) and there is a common core of scepticism (i.e., the questioning of the reliability of experience and sense perception) (Höchsmann 2004: 23). Both Socrates and Confucius were convinced that it is possible to acquire objective knowledge. Socratic doubt and Confucian uncertainty were both, for Höchsmann, all about examining the unreliability of general claims based on individual experience, not necessarily about the capacity of the human mind to know the nature of things.

Confucius' ideas are recorded in the *Analects*, an abbreviated record of his sayings. Unlike the writings of Plato, Aristotle, or Cicero, these are

‘neither a consummate literary composition nor a series of compelling arguments sustained in a philosophical dialogue’ (Höchsmann 2004: 23).⁶ As a discursive record they are fragmentary and have been compared to pre-Socratic writings (Höchsmann 2004: 23). Höchsmann argues that the conversational and somewhat informal structure of these sayings are akin to a persistent inquiry into the nature and practice of *ren* (仁, ‘benevolence’), a key concept in Confucianism, rather than any systematically ordered argumentation (Höchsmann 2004: 13).

Confucius’ philosophy places man at its centre. He believed that man must think for himself, and this led to his placing as much emphasis on thinking as learning. Two of his central concepts were *ren* and *li* (礼, ‘moral custom’), both virtues he considered indispensable for the properly cultivated individual, or *junzi* (君子, ‘gentleman’). Höchsmann points out that Plato’s ‘good man’, someone who fulfils his proper function and seeks wisdom, would resonate well with the Confucian *junzi* (2004: 24).

In the *Analects*, we see Confucius expound the highest form of knowledge as the study of man, not as some kind of abstract principle, but as a way of practicing one’s humanity (1979: 14). Confucius’ purpose, according to Höchsmann, is not to describe the way of the world, but rather the way of morality (2004: 15). Confucius criticizes self-interest and actions that are motivated by profit as the marks of a *xiaoren* (小人, ‘inferior person’), and promotes *li* as a set of rules for governing the appropriate expression of *ren*. *Li* gives ‘the fineness of form to the chaos of experience’ (1979: 16).

The five relationships between human beings (parent/child, husband/wife, friends, old/young, and ruler/ruled) are each guided by *li* as the appropriate expression of *ren*. Therefore, acting in accordance with *li* maintains the social order while acting from *ren* creates kindness and charity (Confucius 1979: 16). *Li*, however, can only provide general rules, with each particular circumstance calling for new interpretations—something that is not dissimilar to Aristotle’s doctrine of the mean. According to Höchsmann, the Confucian notion of righteousness is generated by human relationships, not dictated by abstract rules; since human nature varies, so too does the application of any moral standard (Höchsmann 2004: 17).

Höchsmann considers one of Confucius’ greatest achievements (thanks in part to the later Neoconfucianists) to be using *ren* and *li* as the foundation of a universal ethics (Höchsmann 2004: 17). Some would see Confucianism’s

6 It could be argued that the difference in approach found in the Confucian *Analects* and the Platonic dialectics have had a profound influence on the different ways the East and West approach knowledge and learning to this day.

emphasis on filial piety, reverence for ancestors, and the performance of rites as detrimental to individual expression, which is subsumed into a social matrix of obligations, however, as Höchsmann reminds us, Confucius' emphasis on the cultivation of personal life is a clear indication that he considered the individual to be important (Höchsmann 2004: 20).

Confucianism does not limit itself to a single ideal character; instead, there is a variety, the highest of which, the *sheng ren* (圣人, 'sage'), is an ideal so high that it is hardly ever realised (the fact that this term can also be translated into English as 'saint' probably explains why D.C. Lau tells us that Confucius himself claimed neither to be a sage/saint, nor even to have seen one (1979: 13)). For Confucius, the ideal moral character is the *junzi* ('gentleman'), which is discussed in more than eighty chapters of the *Analects* (1979: 14). Lau identifies *junzi* and *xiaoren* as 'correlative and contrasted terms', with the former used for men in authority and the latter for those over whom they rule (1979: 14). Yet they both also remain essentially moral terms, the *junzi* being the man of cultivated moral character, and the *xiaoren* the opposite.

For the gentleman to reach his fullest potential he must (like the good man in Cicero, Plato, and Aristotle) take part in government. This does not mean that 'the arduous process of self-cultivation is a mere means to the end of personal preferment' (Confucius 1979: 31): study and the holding of office were seen as complementary activities, both of which were inseparable from the Confucian concept of the gentleman. This is why Confucius says, 'When a man in office finds that he can more than cope with his duties, then he studies; when a student finds that he can more than cope with his studies, then he takes office' (XIX.13) (Confucius 1979: 155).

For Confucius, politics was an extension of morals; if the ruler is benevolent, then the government would naturally work for the good of the people. Behind Confucius' ideal moral character lies the assumption that the only purpose one can have, and the only worthwhile thing to do, is to become as good as possible. This goal has to be pursued for its own sake, with indifference to success or failure. Being moral, being a good citizen, is its own reward.

Conclusion

The good life may be an active one, full of political engagement, but to be politically engaged citizens must cultivate themselves (and today, unlike in the ancient world, this includes women). Politics, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, is part of our toolbox for survival. Political life developed in

the ancient Greek *polis* and came into being (to paraphrase Aristotle) to foster life but continues to promote good living. 'Political' in the ancient world did not simply mean politics: it also encompassed ethics and philosophy, all of which flourished in the Athenian *polis* at the time when Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle were working to establish frames of reference we still use today.

When a young Athenian male was being educated, it was not just with concern for the laws of the country, but also its moral and social codes. This is strikingly similar to the notion of the Confucian gentleman, who was also educated to respond appropriately in any given situation—whose education was focused on generalities, not specifics.

What unites Greek thought and Confucianism is the fact that they were both pragmatic, both, in essence, secular. The difference between ancient Greece and China was the fact that China had no free cities. This was also the difference between Greece and later imperial Rome, which subsumed the city-state into the state apparatus, coarsening its principles as it did so. What saved these principles from being ruined altogether was Cicero's reviving of them, and his insistence that a wise person was virtuous—virtue being, as we saw, perfected reason. This resonates strongly with the Confucian notion of *junzi* ('gentleman'). For a Confucian gentleman to reach his fullest potential he must take part in government—something Cicero would have agreed with, and one of the things that caused his summary dismissal of Epicureanism and its concept of *lathe biosas*.

Plato's questioning of who rules whom, and with what justification, resulted in his formulation of political ideals that were too unattainable. Aristotle's response was to both investigate how to live the good life and seek ways of doing so, thereby developing the 'doctrine of the mean'. When a good man is ruling well he exercises what Aristotle calls perfect virtue. Part of the virtue of being a good citizen is to be ruled well, but as this does not require wisdom it is less praiseworthy—which again echoes the difference between the *junzi* ('gentleman') and the *xiaoren* ('petty person') in Confucius's teachings.

Happiness for Aristotle is a form of activity: the complete and perfect use of all our faculties under the guidance of virtue. It consists of the exercise of the highest form of virtue; because the exercising of virtue itself constitutes a pleasure, happiness and pleasure are therefore one and the same thing. Aristotle's ideal of happiness (as outlined in the *Eudemian Ethics*) can therefore be seen as a combination of philosophy, politics, and pleasure-seeking—but even if the happy man were to value contemplation above all else, part of his happiness must also lie in the exercise of political virtues and the enjoyment (in moderation) of human pleasures. Happiness, therefore, can be seen as the best of all human goals.

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2. Spaces of the Prudent Self

Li Shiqiao

Abstract

This paper seeks an understanding of the city through the formulations of spatial features stemming from the prudent self, which are constructed differently in China and in Greco-Roman conceptions. Space, caution, and foresight are intertwined in the spatial production of the city; here, the most profound force shaping the city is often the most intimate to the body as it takes care of itself. The body constructed in relation to perceived risk and safety not only formulates its own physical characteristics (i.e., the combatant body versus the body in safety), but also strategizes how to obtain protection in its immediate spatial context (i.e., openness versus concealment). These modes of spatial production result in enormously complex but conceptually distinctive decisions with regard to encirclement, access, and the articulation of large amounts of architecture that enable and perpetuate urban life. More importantly, these modes of spatial production are accompanied by patterns of moral and aesthetic cultivation that underpin the political, economic, and cultural institutions of the city. Ideas of prudence, despite their illusive nature in theory and in practice, command an important role in simultaneously explicating the physical construction of urban space and the moral and aesthetic constructs of cultural practices.

Keywords: prudence, China, city, safety, care

Among all ancient human concerns—the fertility of the body, the peacefulness of society, and the goodness of the cosmos—nothing seems to be as divergent as the formulations of the ideas of prudence. We may be enthusiastic about radical cultural change, but cultures are exceptionally stable structures: many deeper cultural structures do not seem to change, even though their surface appearances constantly adapt to outside influences.

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Prudence appears to be at the heart of the formation of one of these very stable structures of culture; foresight and caution are central to life, and the practice of the care of the self results from perception of emerging danger identified by foresight. While there is hardly a precise measure for the right amount of prudence—too much of it hinders one's ability to secure resources in a competitive environment; too little of it exposes oneself to destruction—civilizations make distinct choices based on what may be seen as their preferred 'resource strategies'. For example, the nomadic tribes on the Eurasian Steppe which relied on pastoral economies and pillage would have one idea of prudence, while the East Asian dedication to the patient and laborious tilling of land would have another (Peake and Fleure 1928). This paper attempts to describe the influential civilizational choices stemming from ancient Greece and China in relation to prudence and care of the self, by tracing the prominent impact of moral-aesthetic ideals of prudence on the spatial production of cities.

Perhaps the most central element in the construction of prudence in the West is the understanding of how impulsive actions fit into moral life. While impulse is important to the hunt, the nature of agriculture mitigates it with patient endurance: the cultivation of land with no reward until harvest is slow, but ensures long-term production and the accumulation of resources. What is exceptional is that many impulsive actions are not only tolerated but encouraged in the West, while the same actions are distinctly discouraged and punished in the Chinese cultural context. The consequences of this distinction are not limited to isolated actions but permeate all aspects of people's moral and aesthetic lives. This is one of the most intriguing cultural conditions that produce far-reaching consequences in the design and use of urban spaces. It would be an exaggeration to claim that the endorsement of the hunting impulse is uniquely Western; impulsive actions (and the fearless spirit they embody) are widely accepted across cultures. They are a feature of resource strategies that tend to emphasize the advantage of seizure. Seizure requires the extensive cultivation of skills and knowhow to produce a technological advantage. The Mongol Empire, for example, accomplished tremendous territorial gain on the back of the mounted archer, which was its critical technological advantage, and was able to force its way down to the agricultural plains of China to seize resources. The seventeenth-century European development of science and technology was largely driven by intense competition among the European nations for resources from other parts of the world; the invention of time-keeping devices and the development of astronomy were closely tied with expanding ability in navigation, which was crucial to both trade and empire building at this time.

Several developments in the modern West seem to be particularly outstanding when compared to previously successful empires such as those of the Persians, the Arabs, and the Mongols. These developments are what prompted Friedrich Nietzsche (2009[1882]) and Bertrand Russell (2000[1946]) to enthuse about the mythical origins of impulsive actions, attributing them to the spirit symbolized by the Greek god Dionysus (Bacchus). The first of these developments is the emergence of not only a way of making advantageous weapons, but a way of making knowledge. Before this point, knowledge was made of many different kinds: from history and mathematics to alchemy and astrology; many great achievements can be found in the Arab world, India, and China. Rather, this is 'empiricism': a method of inquiry that is exclusively imagined as a strategy that produces a measurable benefit. The relentless competition of global European empires in the seventeenth century greatly sharpened the energy of this type of knowledge production; it was an 'empiricist revolution' within a 'scientific revolution' that created the most powerful impact historically. This development caused the church and intellectuals in Europe to raise tremendous concerns concerning the deeper purpose of making knowledge: if all is for power and profit, where does virtue fit into the scheme (Li 2006)?

The second and more important of these developments is the moral legitimation and aesthetic immersion associated with impulsive actions. In this case, the rather savage hunting impulse accompanied by alcoholic intoxication is far too crude and needs to be gradually transformed into the moral qualities of enthusiasm and courage. This is a new kind of virtue, which replaced the old one of being good with a new logic of being useful. Despite various stages of transformation in manners and etiquette, versions of impulsive actions and alcoholic intoxication remain. In strategic thinking, this is sometimes reimaged as 'risk-taking', a normative moral instruction in Western institutions of education. Of course, the justification for taking risk is not the potential destruction, but the potential for a disproportionately large reward—just like the hunt. The aesthetic pleasure of horse riding—something that has almost totally escaped the Chinese aesthetic sensibility—derives from this crucial function of the hunt as seizure (Creel 1965). The cultivation of this disposition towards enthusiasm and courage is, among other aspects, a sensibility that valorises 'creativity'—not necessarily human creative ability, which is common, but the aestheticizing of creativity—as the preferred ability that primes the moralized impulsive actions. This is creativity as performance. In this cultivation, creativity is often extolled even where no creative change is necessary in a given situation.

The politics that arise from this epistemological, moral, and aesthetic construct is crucially invested in intra-peer equality (democracy) and inter-peer domination (civilizing missions). This is a form of politics that cultivates a human condition that may be best represented by the ancient Greek and Roman ideal of *otium ludens*, a life of active leisure and play towards pleasurable ends. Despite the extraordinary elegance in the institutions of democracy and the establishment of etiquette, this political condition is rather paradoxical: the elegance of intra-peer equality is only possible when it is coupled with inter-peer domination. Marxists describe this paradoxical condition as a ‘class structure’ that would lead to inevitable social instability and the downfall of this ‘bourgeois society’ of carefully constructed politeness.

What perhaps saved the bourgeois society, complete with all its elegance and etiquette, from this inevitable downfall is the clever scheme of ‘the world-system’, which is most effectively described by Immanuel Wallerstein as an inter-nation-state financial system that relocates the work to be done by certain classes from one state to another (2011). This world-system originates from seventeenth-century European empire building, but did not become the defining feature of our daily lives until the twentieth century. It was through this long period of the development of the world-system that China, and Asia as a whole, was gradually transformed from culturally diverse territories to its current function as the Other of the West. This transformation is itself a fascinating history, from the imaginative interpretations of Marco Polo (1997[c 1300]) and John Webb (2004[1669]); to the enthusiastic praises of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1994a) and Voltaire (1756); to the harsh racial, social, and philosophical critique of Hegel (1822-1830) and Herder (1787); to the sympathetic understandings of Marcel Granet (1934) and François Jullien (2004). But it was the Hegelian instinct of seeing China as a flawed aberration in the process of historical development—not surprisingly, associated with the civilizing missions of the colonial era—that dominated political and economic actions in the West. Without this understanding, which found strong echoes in the observations of Lord Macartney on his trade mission to China in the eighteenth century (Barrow and Macartney 1807), the Opium Wars would probably not have taken place. The lack of intra-peer equality in the Chinese (and Asian) cultural context was often quickly rendered as a lack of freedom and democracy, and the tendency to avoid conflict was seen as the absence of courage. On the whole, instead of looking deeply into civilizations with problems and promises formed by different languages and moral frameworks, nineteenth-century European judgments of China and Asia often focused on the perceived backwardness

of their civilization, a self-serving evaluation in the process of colonization through civilizing missions.

In a similar vein, academic studies in the West on Chinese cities (and Asian cities in a broader sense) have been reconstituted through Western discourses of urban theory that inherently stem from Western experiences of the city. These discourses construct a knowledge of Chinese cities but simultaneously dislocate them from their intellectual settings; this perception is the ground for Max Weber's focus on the lack of municipal independence and institutions of capitalism in Chinese cities, which overlooks features of the residents' everyday lives that function differently from those in the West (1986[1921]). It is in this context that, for many centuries, normative understanding of the meaning of prudence has been dominated by that of the West, which has its origin in the formulations of the ancient Greeks and, through modifications, those of the Christian religion. Some of these formulations are explored in the Chapter 1 of this volume, Gregory Bracken's 'Citizenship and the Good Life'. From here, assessments of urban spaces—open rather than closed, transparent rather than opaque, common rather than private—are made based on implicit cultural assumptions, and Chinese cities are either seen as examples that fall short of culturally assumed ideals, or as romanticized alternatives to the ideals.

Through postcolonial critique in the recent decades, and the practice of political correctness in the North American context, the notion of "peers" have been extended across barriers of class, gender, and race. However, this development is paradoxical; if the structural purpose of the social peer structure is about resource distribution, the condition of universal peer equality upsets this deep cultural structure. It is no wonder that this extension of peer groups to cross the barriers of class, gender, and race is facing a resurgence of peer identities: ideas of inter-peer superiority, gated communities, the global proliferation of sweatshops, and complex financial instruments that sustain inequality at an unprecedented level. The dream of universal equality is forever frustrated by the reality of inter-peer domination, and this is most apparent—in the form of the return of the older politics of inter-peer domination that was characteristic of the colonial era—whenever resource-induced anxieties and crises emerge in different parts of the world.

The morality, aesthetics, and politics of impulsive actions, characterized by the crucial formulation of prudence, come as one package consisting of a form of political economy and a tradition of city-building. Here, it seems that the city and the society construct one another in one seamless act. To begin to account for a different cultural scenario, we will need to begin

with a complex set of assumptions that originate in a different conception of danger and risk in relation to the prudent self. This is a conception that is much more closely aligned with the characteristics of agriculture, which involves a constant struggle to contain impulsive actions. This is an equally powerful and productive civilizing force, one that will give us a new framework if we acknowledge it, as both an affection of the human mind, and a mode of the occupation of space. Here, prudence, instead of being seen as a proportionate combination of affections, is conceived as a singular affection.

Proportion versus singularity

Therefore, what is unique about Western civilization is not so much impulsive actions themselves, but the long history of the moralization and aestheticization of impulsive actions in human conduct; this is most prominent in the notion of proportion proposed by moral and aesthetic theories. Whether it is Aristotle's conception of prudence as calculation or Cicero's notion of prudence as practice (Hariman 2003), it contains the idea that we should neither side with unchecked impulse nor with endless caution but follow a proportionate mixture of both; on their own, impulse and caution are both destructive. This formulation remained consistent, with only slight variations, when it was transmitted from Greco-Roman thought into Christian virtues. In Plato's *Republic*, prudence (or wisdom), as we have seen in the previous chapter, is presented as one of the four cardinal human virtues; in Thomas Aquinas's reformulation, prudence is the cause, measure, and form of all other Christian virtues. The key to an understanding of the proportionate nature of prudence perhaps lies in Plato's *Timaeus*, in which proportion is understood as the central bond of components, a *chora* within which all parts of the world make sense. Prudence, in this sense, becomes meaningful if it is made of the right mixture between impulse and caution.

Confucius, who decisively influenced much of Asian political and moral life, comes from a very different place; his thoughts are more closely connected to the needs of agriculture—the need for patient endurance—rather than to the immediate pleasure and reward of the hunt. Confucius reacted against a dominant political thought that placed a twin emphasis on agriculture and war. Known misleadingly as the 'Legalist' tradition, this political thought assumed the selfishness of individuals, their propensity to be drawn towards emoluments and rewards, and advocated the need to create a strong state and complex bureaucracy of control through offering emoluments

and rewards as a means of sustaining the peaceful and productive life. This was spectacularly successful through the rise of the Qin Dynasty (221-207 BCE), but also astonishingly short-lived. Aiming at a more moderate and sustainable version of the Legalist thought as a political system, Confucius instead placed great stress on *ren* (仁, 'benevolence')—the willingness of the powerful and the wealthy to put themselves in the shoes of the less endowed—which gives rise to all forms of happiness and thriving. The central justification for this political vision is the inherent goodness of unconditional parental devotion and love; Confucius turned this parental devotion and love toward rankings and rituals, the practice of which, to him, would ensure harmony of family and that of the state. To rule effectively, says Confucius in *The Great Learning*, one must regulate families, cultivate their persons, rectify their hearts, be sincere in their thoughts, extend their knowledge, and investigate things.¹ This is the key to peace and happiness: by mitigating the impulsivity of each individual, greater good is ensured; this is the nature of both the state and the family. This is where he diverges most profoundly from the Greek instinct of seeing the state and the family as having irreconcilable differences (Aristotle 2001). In the moral world of Confucius, a person is always simultaneously free and not free: Confucius exemplifies this in *Analects* when he speaks to a person in a lower rank with freedom, but to a person with higher rank with unease and precision.² Clearly, this was not seen as a perversion of free life, but rather a means of avoiding endless violence, even though in practice both the protection of freedom and the avoidance of violence are not guaranteed. This is profoundly different from the conception of intra-peer equality and inter-peer domination; instead, Confucius promoted a singular hierarchy that is analogous to the specific and uncompromising understanding of wisdom that come from age, the importance of human reproduction that benefit from the stability of the family, and the functions of conventional gender roles. The central quality necessary to sustain these ritualized hierarchies is prudence—which in this case is not a mixture of impulse and caution, but the total absence of impulse: a deeply cultivated state of mind. Impulse in this conception is utterly barbaric and is precisely what the civilizing force is created to mitigate. The prudence of Confucius is infinite and not proportional; it is a prudence born of a conception of a binary of extremes.

Civilizations inspired by Confucius never seem to have achieved a similar level of sophistication in building institutions of democracy as in the West. It

1 Confucius, Verse 2, *The Great Learning* (c.500 BCE).

2 Confucius, Chapter 10, Verse 2, *Analects* (c.500 BCE).

is also clear, however, that traditional political institutions are far from being replaced by Western institutions of democracy. In a singular hierarchical framework, the idealized equality between people of all genders and ages seems admirable but in the last instance unsustainable; a single hierarchy necessitates essentialization of class, gender, and racial differences. The mitigation of this convention of unfairness can be first, the ruler has to follow a “benevolent” ideal, and second, the resultant stability improves lives for all. This way of thinking circumvents the deep paradox of intra-peer equality and inter-peer domination. Confucius is more of a realist in working with human differences. Elsewhere I have maintained that while scholars such as Hannah Arendt (1958) and Richard Sennett (2008) argued passionately against the conditions of the labouring body as something distinctly inferior and inhuman, the Chinese view of the labouring body is far more normative (Li 2014). Confucian thought does not seem to separate labour from work; it is perhaps economically and morally unsustainable to create a slave class just in order to remove labour from a contrived elegance of life. In this way, Confucius also managed to have thought without the aid of a supernatural god; this is no less fascinating than the notion of a singular hierarchy, as Marcel Granet (1934) and François Jullien (2004) emphasize in their most sympathetic writings on Chinese thought.

If in ancient Chinese cosmology the world of things is governed by the principle of a fundamental binary (*yin* and *yang*, 阴阳), in the world of human virtues, it appears that singularity is the key: benevolence and prudence should not be proportional, but infinite. The notion of prudence that works within this singular hierarchy is constructed on radically different grounds from those of the Greco-Roman tradition. Confucius himself conceived prudence as something that one could never have too much of: a gentleman can never be prudent enough.³ In advising on the ways of political advancement, Confucius stressed the importance of prudent speeches and actions:

Hear much and put aside the points of which you stand in doubt, while you speak cautiously at the same time of the others – then you will afford few occasions for blame. See much and put aside the things which seem perilous, while you are cautious at the same time in carrying the others into practice – then you will have few occasions for repentance. When one gives few occasions for blame in his words, and few occasions for repentance in his conduct, he is in the way to get emolument.⁴

3 Confucius, *Family Sayings* (c.500 BCE).

4 Confucius, Chapter 2, Verse 18, *Analects* (translated by James Legge).

This basic instinct is consistent in both the teachings of Confucius and the developments of Confucian thought by the Neoconfucians from the twelfth century onwards.

The body in safety

Why were the aesthetic sensibilities of the ancient Greeks so attuned to perfect naked male bodies while those of the Chinese so carefully avoided them? The depictions of vivid facial expressions and muscular structures in ancient Greece can indeed be seen as showing the ideal of well-endowed bodies in the midst of great exertion: characteristics of the impulsive body in search of its own moral and aesthetic fulfilment. In many ways, the Christian imagination of the body can be seen as descended from this Greek tradition, but inverted: instead of the pursuit of pleasure through exertion, the Christian body suffers in pain. The body in pain is the spiritual version of the body in exertion; it is engaged in a moral combat rather than a physical one, a triumphant symbol of the dangerous contestation of spirituality. The body in exertion can indeed be regarded as the archetypal condition of political, legal, and intellectual debates; the mind, in this case, is conceived as gaining strength from a precarious situation in which it risks failure, like Popper's falsificationism (1959). In each of these important spheres of human life, power, justice, and truth are imagined as stemming from contestations, variously materialized spatially as a parliament, a court house, and a classroom.

If we place celebrated paintings of human bodies from Renaissance painters such as Botticelli (1445–1510) next to those of the early Ming Dynasty such as Tang Yin (1470–1524), the contrast is stark. While Renaissance painters were eager to reinvigorate the ancient sensibilities of the Greco-Roman art, the Ming *literati* were also attempting to reconnect with their own ancient orthodoxy after a century of Mongol rule. The Chinese way of depicting the body was deeply conditioned by the Confucianist notion of infinite prudence: the body entirely constructed with the meticulous avoidance of appearances of conflict. Real conflict, rather than its appearances, is managed very differently here, both indirectly and obliquely. While depictions of fearsome gods and dragons were widely used to inspire a sense of protection of family dwellings, in the tradition of *literati* paintings, there is little emphasis on facial and bodily expressions; instead, bodies are concealed by flowing dresses and enveloping landscapes. Leibniz was astonished by this trait of Chinese civilization as it seemed so radically different from

anything he was familiar with: 'They despise everything which creates or nourishes ferocity in men, and almost in emulation of the higher teachings of Christ (and not, as some wrongly suggest, because of anxiety), they are averse to war' (Leibniz 1994b[1697/1699]). Since the seventeenth-century Jesuit introduction of Christianity to China, the Christian body in pain has been a most distressing image in the Chinese mind; this is one of the main reasons that Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) encountered great resistance in China. One of the key distinctive characters of Confucian thought is consider human affairs without referring to supernatural beings; this feature of Chinese thought—Granet and Jullien describe it as 'immanence'—certainly conspired with the moral and aesthetic sensibility of the body in peace and harmony against the rather fierce imaginations of the Christian faith.

The infinitely prudent body in safety of the Chinese cultural context has its own way to gather strength outside the format of combat. It is far more defensive. It is invested in the avoidance of faults and negligence through diligence and endurance; these take precedence over wit and humour, which are central to oral debates but peripheral to the virtues of caution and diligence in the context of the singular hierarchy. This is perhaps the reason for the enormous emphasis on completeness and thoroughness, rather than novelty of perspective, in the Chinese intellectual tradition. To some extent, the great success of its documentation and accumulation of knowledge production is also its own unbearable burden: the disposition toward completeness and thoroughness often became a figurative pursuit of quantity and organization. It was the Western empiricist tradition that brought a critical component to Chinese intellectual life, without which it would be hard to uphold any notion of completeness and thoroughness of knowledge today.

It is ironic that by insisting on removing conflict from spheres of civility, Confucianism makes violence more unaccountable. To internalize conflict in civility (or to live dangerously, as Nietzsche incites) leads to rules of engagement that moderate and moralize violence to some degree; to externalize conflict through self-restraint (as Confucius insists) leads to a very complex situation. On the one hand, there is a real result of less violence within certain limits; on the other, there is often what Freud would have described as a sublimation of violence resulting from suppression. It is important to keep in mind that, rather than limiting conflict, infinite prudence could lead to a different kind of conflict. The history of violence in China is revealing: in the 2430 years between 481 BCE and 1949 CE, 962 years were spent in wars and destruction, accounting for approximately

40 percent of Chinese history (Shi 2003). The research of Ruth Benedict, an anthropologist who investigated the puzzling contrast of extreme civility at home and excessive cruelty abroad in the Japanese context, could also be understood as a consequence of this rather influential exclusion of conflict from normative Asian life (1946).

Degrees of care

The Western notion of prudence is coupled with the political instinct to construct intra-peer equality and inter-peer domination, and these intellectual and political ideals result in public institutions and urban spaces that are deliberately separated from the institution of the family. These are both intellectual imaginations and spatial realities; in ancient Greece, the *agora* (ἀγορά) was simultaneously a space of equality for male citizens and, through exclusion, a space of subjugation for women and slaves. The institutions of slavery and class are central to intra-peer equality and inter-peer domination, even when philosophical and religious idealism demand universal equality and universal care; this universal equality has never been achieved. The race and class ghettos in Western cities today can be seen as a cultural and spatial legacy of this tradition, even though the world-system is also generating a new economic reality in which functional race and class ghettos are exported to other countries.

The spatial legacy of the infinitely prudent body is entirely different. Instead of the 'frontier defence' that tends to characterize Western cities and empires, the practices of 'corporeal defence' are observable in Chinese cities. One of the most extraordinary operations of this corporeal defence seems to be the mouth, which has the dual function of expulsion and intake; it is through the mouth that the removal of poison (spitting) and the blocking of pollution (masking) work hand-in-hand to protect the body. Here, the imagination of the singularity of safe spaces first imagines its own corporeal defence, instead of safe zones protected by 'frontiers' further afield. This corporeal defence is an intricate system of the protection and regimentation of food intake and exercise. Immediately beyond the body is a city that is made not of the duality of public and private institutions and spaces, but of degrees of care. The nature of its political institutions have never been fundamentally different from the institution of the family. While Aristotle was keen to stress the differences between a small state and a large family, Confucius sees a singular enlargement of institutions from the family to the state: the typologies of relationships just become

more complex, the bureaucracies more diversified, and the rituals more strictly enforced.

There seem to be three broad categories of spatial care within this spectrum: intensive care, regular care, and carelessness. In their elemental forms, intensive care is grounded in the archetype of the family; regular care in units of economic interest; and carelessness where neither of the previous two kinds of care apply. In the first scenario, care is intense not just on the grounds of love and affection, but on the grounds of moral responsibility; historically (and to a lesser extent in contemporary Chinese societies), family members were responsible for each other's transgressions as well as honoured by their accomplishments. The strictness of the discipline and the harshness of the punishments in traditional Chinese societies were particularly pronounced in this aspect. Urban spaces in Chinese (and many other Asian) cities are much harder to read in terms of their public and private functions; urban spaces in China tend to be consequences of this spectrum of degrees of care.

Degrees of care are both ideas and physical manifestations of different scales and varieties. The notion of intensive care, which takes the family as its archetype, is naturally centred on the family: the familial hierarchy formed from age and gender differences is reflected historically in the locations of ancestral halls, the arrangement of the quarters of male and female children by age, and the overall idea of the walled compound. Here, prudence dictates spatial concealment through opaque walls. The Great Wall of China and the walls of the courtyard house share the same territorial imagination of the body of infinite prudence. The various revolutions and reforms in the twentieth century have had an enormous impact on the reality of the Chinese family, but not in the sense of removing the traditional framework of the family from Chinese life; instead, it has been reconstituted to accommodate new political, economic, and social realities. What is truly interesting and revealing is how the rest of the society responds to this familial archetype: circles of friends, social institutions, and the state as a whole are all imagined as derivatives of the familial archetype. This sensibility is already in the language; the state, in Chinese, is a *guojia* (国家, 'state family'), and the generic notion of the social is as a *dajia* (大家, 'big family'). Social groupings based on work, birthplace, education, and other social activities are many, but these social formations are not quite the fraternities, monasteries, and clubs that, in the West, seek freedom and spiritual life outside the family archetype. In China, the Buddhist and Daoist monasteries which function as extra-familial communities—*chujia* (出家, 'leaving home') is necessary

to join—never gained mainstream social and political power. The reality of the very different demands and relationships in Chinese social and political institutions often led to compromises: hybrids between social institutions and the familial archetype.

The hybrid nature of the social institutions in Chinese cities is what prompted the formulation of the second category, regular care. More often than not, social institutions—unities of economic interests—are formed with a bond that is not as strong, and a hierarchy not as absolute, as that of the family, but that nevertheless is tremendously influential. In more institutionalized settings, this is reflected in the *danwei* (单位, ‘work unit’) and *xiaoqu* (小区, ‘small district’) that define vast stretches of spaces in Chinese cities. In a social setting, regular care is seen in the world of *guanxi* (关系, ‘connections’ or ‘networks’), but unlike similar connections and networks in Western cities, these are distinctly and universally tinted with shades of the family archetype. Despite the social nature of these associations, familial references are constantly brought in to legitimize judgments: social relations are reframed in conversations and banter in terms of the benevolence of parental care and the dedication of sibling love. Often these play out in ubiquitous social spaces such as enclosed rooms in restaurants and karaokes, and increasingly in social media.

Among all of the features of the Asian city, the state of carelessness is perhaps the most alien spatial reality to the Western eye; one could certainly draw parallels between the family courtyard and the spaces of social associations in different cultures, but to imagine spaces which do not fall into any categories of care is not easy. Carelessness is prominent: streets full of litter, rivers piled with rubbish, and wilderness abandoned with little care all produce an overwhelming experience. More recently, industrial pollution also brings carelessness to the air. In the Chinese cultural context, carelessness is coupled with a very distinct conception of space, known as *jianghu* (江湖), which literally means ‘rivers and lakes’. This refers to both an imagined space as well as real places. As an imagined space, it plays an enormously important role in art and literature; it is in *jianghu* that the singular hierarchy and ubiquitous restraint of the Confucian moral code break down, giving rise to different kinds of ethics and codes of conduct that are bold and refreshing. It never fails to delight the readers who live in the normative Confucianist moral life. The late sixteenth-century novel *The Water Margin* is an enduring classic in which the outlaws of Confucian society become heroes, and impulsive actions become morally acceptable through the virtue of fraternal loyalty. This novel may have been a collection of various early folklores; its enduring popularity is certainly a clear

indication of a powerful cultural imagination. Contemporary versions of *jianghu* are equally gripping, such as in the masterful popular novels of Louis Cha (which describe an imaginary world of danger, courage, and heroic deeds) and the stunning cinematic renditions of John Woo (which show a realistic and morally ambiguous world of gangster-versus-police drama).

Jianghu's physical presence is equally immense in the production of urban spaces. If *jianghu* is a state of mind, all urban spaces outside the home are subject to that imagination. Most frequently, water spaces like rivers are most conveniently imagined, and treated with carelessness. Streets are particularly prone to the imagination of *jianghu*, where the exquisite politeness seen within interior courtyards turns into rude pushing and shoving, where the delightful beauty of a family garden is replaced by the disturbing sights of endless litter. The insight here is crucially important when we see people walking on dirty streets in pyjamas in China—a jarring and amusing scene to the outside observer. Here, it is perhaps more important to understand that streets to some are *jianghu* and to others spaces of intensive care; the compounding and confusion of these different individual perceptions lead to both littering and pyjama-wearing without ever appearing to be anything out of the extraordinary.

Despite the fact that the twentieth century has brought many divergent intellectual influences to bear on the development of Chinese cities, the impact of the underlying indigenous thoughts are more persistent than they often appear. Framing Chinese cities, and Asian cities in general, in terms of their intellectual and cultural aspirations—both as promotions of life and as restrictions of impulsive actions—provides a particular reflexive strength in our knowledge of the city, even though this is intrinsically difficult to accomplish and easy to undermine. Here, the introduction of the infinitely prudent body—a very specific conception and a set of practices with a tremendous spatial legacy—reveals the powerful mechanisms of constructing cities both historically and today. It is through this formulation of the cultural specificity in China that we arrive at an understanding of the Chinese city. Through the same process, our familiar thoughts on the constitution of the Western city can be examined more critically in parallel.

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3. The Biopolitics of Sexuality and the Hypothesis of an Erotic Art

Foucault and Psychoanalysis

Luiz Paulo Leitão Martins

Abstract

This chapter discusses Michel Foucault's interpretation of the biopolitics of power and of the device of sexuality in Western society, taking into account the possibility of an *ars erotica* ('erotic art') that is both detached from the scientific model of knowledge and truth and related to the use of pleasures and to the practice of the care of the self. If we consider that this contrast is developed in *The Will to Knowledge*, we must also recognize that Freud, together with Jacques Lacan, is Foucault's main interlocutor, since psychoanalysis is the point of arrival of this modern device that leads one to formulate the truth about sex. Within a genealogical sequence that dates back to psychiatry's disciplinary practices and to the deployment of the examination of consciousness and the direction of pastoral power, the regime of power-knowledge-pleasure in the psychoanalytic experience is reduced to a knowledge of sexuality. Whether by transference into the clinical setting or by the adoption of the repressive hypothesis, Freud's theory is understood as the development of a social normalization project through the classification of individuals as somewhere between normal and pathological and the constitution of a qualified population. Opposed to this psychoanalytic perspective, Foucault's hypothesis concerns the possibility of a sexual practice that is not reducible to the biopolitics of sexuality. The pursuit of pleasures in such eroticism would be less related to the scientific model of self-knowledge and more related to both the perspective of the care of the self and the conception of an aesthetic experience, as in some examples presented by Foucault from ancient Greece and certain societies in the East.

Keywords: biopolitics, sexuality, society, subject, *ars erotica* ('erotic art')

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Introduction

This chapter presents a critical view on the sexuality practices of modern societies and discusses the question of the production of subjectivity using Michel Foucault's concept of techniques of the self. What I propose is a new approach to a very important topic in Foucault's work, which arises first in some of his courses at the Collège de France and later, more systematically and better organized, in his book *The Will to Knowledge* originally published in France in 1976.

In light of Foucault's definition of sexuality and its relationship with power, there is a key distinction between the presence of a device of sexuality in Western societies and the hypothesis of the existence of an erotic art (Foucault 1978: 70-71). While for Foucault the device of sexuality is related to a very specific form of power as practiced in modern societies, namely biopolitics, the idea of an erotic art, which is present in some non-Western societies, belongs to another tradition that is neither reducible to the scientific model of knowledge nor to its normative perspective. Moreover, for Foucault it is through this other tradition of eroticism that it is possible to find another use for the pleasures of sexuality, which is closer to the ancient Greek experience of the care of the self (Foucault 1978: 57-58; Foucault 1986: 38).

Thus we have on the one hand the device of sexuality, and on the other the hypothesis of erotic art. It is through these two ways of thinking about sexuality that I propose: 1) to examine the relationship between sex and power in modern societies (Foucault 1994c: 222-225); and 2) to relate this discussion to one of the most important questions for Foucault, namely the techniques of the self and the subjectification process (Foucault 1994f: 171-174).

To achieve this, I have divided this paper into three sections. First, I present the main theoretical elements used by Foucault to define what he calls the 'device of sexuality'. In this discussion it is necessary to consider two different methods for the interpretation of the relationship between sexuality and power: one by repression, which Foucault criticises; and another by the productive incitement and discursive multiplication of sexualities (Foucault 1978: 3-49).

Second, I propose to relate these approaches to the very particular reading of psychoanalysis that he also develops in *The Will to Knowledge* (Foucault 1978: 129-131). If we consider that psychoanalysis is the only one that relates both desire and law in most of Foucault's references, we must also admit that when Foucault criticises the repressive hypothesis he must have the psychoanalytic theory of desire in mind. Thus, I would like to clarify the meaning of Foucault's specific but important reference to psychoanalysis,

which can help us better understand some of the internal problems and limitations of the repressive theory of sexuality (Foucault 2003a: 235-237).

Finally, I discuss some aspects that Foucault presents in the chapter 'Scientia sexualis' in *The Will to Knowledge*, in the attempt to define a hypothesis of resistance to the device of power that characterizes modern sexuality (Foucault 1978: 53-73). The tradition of erotic art, of which there is some evidence in certain non-Western societies, including China, Japan, India, and some Islamic Arab countries, as well as in ancient Greece and Rome, may, according to Foucault, indicate a model of sexuality that is not present in Western societies. But, what can be considered an erotic art? And what could be its relevance for today's sexual practices in the West?

In summary, this paper addresses the following three aspects of Foucault's analysis: the device of sexuality, in opposition to the repressive theory of sexuality; the critique of psychoanalysis; and Foucault's hypothesis on the existence of an erotic art. Through these three points of problematization, I want to consider the link between sexuality and the practices of the self, insofar as it involves models of subjectivity.

The repressive hypothesis and the device of sexuality

First, the device of sexuality. The entire first volume of *The History of Sexuality* is a critique of the repressive hypothesis. According to Foucault, the idea that, in our modern Western societies, the relationship between subject and sexuality has been governed by a fundamental principle of repression or interdiction does not correspond to the historical emergence of several kinds of sexual practices in modernity and to the increase of scientific discourses on sexuality.

According to the repressive hypothesis, sexuality was present in society in a free and direct way until the mid-eighteenth century (Foucault 1978: 3-4): sexual anatomy was displayed, speech appeared without shame or reticence, and gestures were performed directly. In short, the whole universe of sexual practices was simultaneously visible in the social space and available to everyone. While there still might have been some restrictions or decorum that governed sexual practices within the family, in the public domain sexuality could move freely, and apparently without fears or concerns.

Nevertheless, according to this hypothesis, in the nineteenth century sexuality became restricted to the inside of the home and to the private space of the family (Foucault 1978: 4-7). Eroticism was not present anymore, but became restricted to the monogamist and heterosexual relationship of the couple. The

family became the unique and legitimate model of sexuality, due to its role in reproduction and procreation (Foucault 2003a: 244-249). This was the time of Victorian restrictions, the Industrial Revolution, and the establishment of the bourgeoisie—the time in which what is not useful for productive work is doomed to silence until its complete disappearance (Foucault 2003a: 268-274).

According to this viewpoint, until the middle of the eighteenth century sexuality was a social practice that was present in the public space, with an institutionalized function and acceptance. But with the advent of the nineteenth century, it acquired another status. The Industrial Revolution, the establishment of the capitalist economic system of production, and the constitution of the family model—all these factors would have promoted the repression of sexuality in the mid-nineteenth century, given the restriction of all the dimension of pleasure due to the reproductive function and to the family ties (Foucault 1978: 110-114).

Through this narrative, the repressive hypothesis proposes a negative reading of sexuality: the opposite of sexual liberation can only be interdiction, rejection, and the denial of sexuality. In this way, the delimitation of the field of sexuality in modern societies must be done according to the principles both of an economic model of power, which determines the repressive norm of the use of pleasures, and of a model of sexuality that can only be understood in terms of repression or liberation (Foucault 1978: 48-52; Foucault 2003a: 169-171).

According to Foucault's argument, it was in fact the opposite that happened during the birth of modernity in the eighteenth century. Instead of interdiction, rejection, and denial, there was a newly progressive introduction of sexuality into the speech field and the emergence of a plurality of sexual practices that were not reducible to the family or heterosexual space (Foucault 1978: 36-49). This period saw the multiplication of sexual discourses and an evident increase of sexuality practices in society. This is Foucault's productive theory of sexuality, which he placed in opposition to the repressive hypothesis. In Foucault's words:

We must therefore abandon the hypothesis that modern industrial societies ushered in an age of increased sexual repression. We have not only witnessed a visible explosion of unorthodox sexualities; but—and this is the important point—a deployment quite different from the law, even if it is locally dependent on procedures of prohibition, has ensured, through a network of interconnecting mechanisms, the proliferation of specific pleasures and the multiplication of disparate sexualities (Foucault 1978: 49).

But what are the events that caused this discontinuity in the modern genealogy (Foucault 1994j: 136-141)? How can we identify the historical formation, using Foucault's very specific term, of this modern device that he calls sexuality?

First, according to Foucault, there was the significant historical growth of the Catholic pastoral and its sacraments in the sixteenth century (Foucault 1978: 18-21). With the Council of Trent (1545-1563), the Catholic countries began to demand an even more rigorous and exigent practice of confession. There was an increase in both the frequency of confession and a new demand for the detailed description of every possible sexual desire and sinful thought. The consequences of this process included the formation of a sexual secret that must be confessed—the invention of desire and a practice of sexuality that is formed through a confessional device (Foucault 2012a: 187-189).

Second was the emergence of the widely known libertine literature during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Foucault 1978: 21-25). It became necessary to talk about sex, to put sexuality in discourse, to expose its nature, its most secret pleasures, and to do this in a direct way with the most minute details. It was the time of De Sade (Foucault 1994i: 821-822) and of the author of *My Secret Life* (Foucault 1994h: 101-106). In both France and England, the incitement to talk about sex was correlated to the religious demands to increase confession and perform the examination of one's conscience.

Finally, beyond the confessional device and the development of libertine literature, in the nineteenth century there was also the emergence of the problem of population (Foucault 1978: 25-30; Foucault 2004: 81). If Foucault's (1995: 231-256) description of punishment and vigilance systems in prisons between the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries proposed to identify the formation of procedures of power practiced through disciplinary technologies (i.e., alignment, serialization, separation, and surveillance), his analysis of the emergence of the problem of population in large cities considers not only the power procedures used in different institutions that target the body of individuals (the model of the prison, army, school, and psychiatric asylum), but also the technology of power that aims to act on the multiplicity of the processes that constitute life, in a collective way: the ratio of births to deaths; the rate of reproduction and fertility; longevity; the nature, form, and extension of the illnesses prevalent in a population; and the relationship between human beings and their environment (Foucault 2003b: 244-245).

At the heart of the articulation of these two series—the body-organism-discipline-institutions series and the population-biological processes-regulatory mechanisms series—Foucault (2003b: 250-253) sees the appearance of two important phenomena related to the problem of population in the nineteenth century: the phenomenon of city-planning, that is, the constitution of a

rationally planned layout of a model city; and the phenomenon of sexuality. If we consider the working-class housing estates established in the nineteenth century—the very grid pattern by which cities were articulated in a perpendicular style; the way families (one to a house) and individuals (one to a room) were distributed—all with the aim of increasing the placement of the workforce and its use in the production processes—we can identify a series of disciplinary mechanisms that were exercised by the spatial layout of the city itself. Such working-class housing estates demonstrated an extension of the panoptic model as conceived by Jeremy Bentham, which was used to develop an architecture of surveillance and a partitioning of society that, at the end of the seventeenth century, had to take measures when the plague appeared in its territory (Foucault 1995: 195-230). If we also look at the production of a series of regulatory mechanisms that target the population through insurance systems, old-age pensions, rules about hygiene, and family care instead of through the surveillance and control of individuals, we will find a point of convergence in which disciplinary measures couple with certain regulatory mechanisms (Foucault 2003b: 250-251).

Throughout modern societies and with a particularly strategic importance in the nineteenth century, sexuality became a matter for state regulation, as seen in a series of measures: the analysis of birth rates and of the number of marriages in given periods; inquiries into the precocity and frequency of sexual relations, taking into account fertility; the investigation of both legitimate and illegitimate births; the examination of the effect of contraceptive methods, of sexual abstinence, of celibacy, and so on (Foucault 1978: 116-117). On the one hand, at the level of individual experience sexuality depends on a disciplinary system of power, exercised in the form of a permanent surveillance, as in the famous example of the control of childhood masturbation at both school and home at the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (Foucault 2003a: 231-262). On the other hand, the power over sexuality concerns its procreative effects. If sexuality is not only about individual discipline, but also about living beings as a species, it is inscribed in this biopolitics project which characterizes the population. The urban problem, population growth, public health, and the progress of industry were now the political priorities of governments (Foucault 1978: 17-35).

It is in this historical articulation between the emergence of the problem of population and the issue of sexuality in modernity that Foucault situates the development of a new form of power, namely biopolitics (Foucault 1978: 139). While in the exercise of disciplinary measures the problem of life could only be considered in terms of an anatomo-politics of the human body, with the formulation of a politics of life that was focused on the problem

of population, the mechanisms of power in modern society targeted not only the individual reality of the human as a body, but also the collective quality constituted by the figure of *humanity-as-species* (Foucault 1978: 135-139; Foucault 2003b: 239-243). The multiplication of sexualities and the submission of these practices to the scientific model of knowledge is a very specific part of this general project of population management and government of the living in Western societies.

Sexuality was not banned or suppressed by the modern forms of power; according to Foucault's thesis, it was instead the object of a process of production and incitement, as a result of the biopolitics of population and device of sexuality. Thus, for Foucault:

One had to speak of sex; one had to speak publicly and in a manner that was not determined by the division between licit and illicit, even if the speaker maintained the distinction for himself [...] One had to speak of it as of a thing to be not simply condemned or tolerated but managed, inserted into systems of utility, regulated for the greater good of all, made to function according to an optimum. Sex was not something one simply judged; it was a thing one administered (Foucault 1978: 24).

That is not to say that, for Foucault, the concept of repression was not valid in the interpretation of the evolution of sexual behaviour, nor was it missing from modern society's imaginary. On the contrary, he gives very clear and evident importance to this possible reading of sexuality, as we can see in his preface to the German edition of *The Will to Knowledge*, '*Sexualität und Wahrheit*' (Foucault 1994g: 136-137).

According to Michel Senellart (2013: 36-44), during the 1970s, there were at least two major theoretical currents that presented interpretations of sexual repression: moral philosophy, through the history of mentalities; and demographic studies, which approached the problem from the history of behavioural analysis. It is within this panorama that Foucault's thesis was innovative. What he seems to propose is that repression can be a very specific mechanism, a particular tactic or strategy, of a broader power project that works through positive procedures (Foucault 1978: 81-91). The device of sexuality constituted an affirmative mechanism that included the possibility of negative sexuality practices that was part of the general project of population management and government of the living. It is the complexity of this enterprise of government in Western societies that Foucault seeks to approach in his analysis of the history of sexuality in terms of a bio-history project (1978: 143).

The dialogue with psychoanalysis

When Foucault presents this critique of the repressive hypothesis, he develops his thesis against a whole tradition ranging from the human sciences to psychoanalysis (Foucault 1978: 115-132; Foucault 2003a: 42-52, 235-237; Foucault 2003b: 14-19, 40-44). This tradition, according to Foucault, has created a theoretical opposition between nature and culture, transgression and law, sexuality and morality. Since his studies about the formation of the human sciences and his praise of language (Foucault 1994m: 303-307), Foucault advocated the dissolution of this opposition and the creation of a new space for thought in Western history.

Before approaching this opposition in his studies on the history of sexuality, Foucault had already given evidence of a different possible interpretation of modernity, particularly in 'A Preface to Transgression', a tribute to Georges Bataille (Foucault 1994k: 233-244). For him, what really characterizes modern times is not the opposition between law and transgression, but the open field of language. If we consider the thesis that the Christian God no longer exists, there is no longer a limit imposed by an instance that was unlimited, that is, the transcendent instance. Henceforth, thought becomes free to act by itself through a system of language developed to the infinite (Foucault 1994l: 251-252). The question that remains for Foucault is not the presence of the transcendent God, but how, in modernity, the West has replaced this instance of God with the human subject (Foucault 1994m: 311-317). What Foucault's critique of anthropological thought tries to show is that man as object of knowledge only recently emerged in the history of Western society, and that this emergence can also be transitory (Deleuze 2002: 128-130; Foucault 1994m: 385-386).

In the case of psychoanalysis, early in Sigmund Freud's works can be observed the attempt to establish a strict distinction between the domains of instincts and of civilization. In his article "'Civilized" Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness', Freud develops a key concept for understanding the relationship between sex and morality in psychoanalysis, namely the concept of repression (Freud 1953b: 1950-1953). It is through the repression of sexuality—as a defensive mechanism—that one can regulate relationships with others. The whole psychoanalytic theory of the social bond is based on this principle: that is, the formation of the individual subject is only possible by the interdiction of perverse and infantile desires and by the insertion of the subject into the symbolic order (Fink 1995: 12-13). Although in society sexuality occurs in the most varied and dissimulated forms—this is what Freud calls 'sublimation' (Freud 1953a: 1500; Freud 1953b: 1952)—it should

be noted that, for Freud, the constitution of modern subjectivity can only be understood in reference to the repression of sexuality:

Our civilization is, generally speaking, founded on the suppression of instincts. Each individual has contributed some renunciation—of his sense of dominating power, of the aggressive and vindictive tendencies of his personality. From these sources the common stock of the material and ideal wealth of civilization has been accumulated. Over and above the struggle for existence, it is chiefly family feeling, with its erotic roots, which has induced the individuals to make this renunciation. This renunciation has been a progressive one in the evolution of civilization (Freud 1953b: 1951).

This perspective certainly becomes more complex from *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (Freud, 1953d), especially in *Civilization and its Discontents* (Freud, 1953e). With the experience of the treatment of war neuroses and the clinical presence of the repetition compulsion, Freud's theoretical system had to acknowledge the presence of death instincts in addition to the sexual ones (Freud 1953d: 3745). With this addition to his hypothesis, the destructive impulses of the psyche became regulated by Eros' work, which included sexual instincts and narcissistic impulses (Freud 1953c: 2931-2937; Freud 1953d: 3760-3761). Thereafter, the subjective governance of the instincts was affected by the different impulses of life and by death predispositions (Freud 1953e: 4484-4499). In the relationship of the subject with himself and others, to live so as to not kill or so as to not die were considered the great imperative of this interplay of instincts and defences, where the self was constantly permeated by his own subjective division (Fink 1995: 44-46).

Even with this modification, the relationship of the subject to civilization continued to be affected by the central antagonism between instincts and social field. The main form of this opposition in psychoanalysis became the question of the subject's freedom and his impulses of destruction and violence. Thus, according to Freud:

The liberty of the individual is no gift of civilization. It was greatest before there was any civilization, though then, it is true, it had for the most part no value, since the individual was scarcely in a position to defend it. The development of civilization imposes restrictions on it, and justice demands that no one shall escape those restrictions (Freud 1953e: 4493).

After that, it was Jacques Lacan, in the French context, who reformulated this opposition through the psychoanalytical theory of desire. For Lacan,

if the unconscious instance were structured like a language (Lacan 2006d: 737), and if this language were organized through a chain of signifiers (Lacan 2006a: 420-421), the whole field of subjective desire was thought to be in relation to the symbolic order. It was then by the incidence of a signifier called *phallus* by Lacan that the phantasmic organization of desire could be established (Lacan 2006b: 577).

In this sense, the way Lacan proposed a theory of desire in psychoanalysis assumed both the symbolic organization of the unconscious and the mediation of the subject's relation to the object from the two possibilities of the presence or absence of the phallic function. This organization—insofar as the subject was marked by his own lack of participation in the phallic order—was always affected by the impossibility of having sex. That is why we find the formulation 'there's no such thing as a sexual relationship' in Lacan (1998: 59). This means that even if the satisfaction of the subject is ultimately linked to his enjoyment of the object, it is between this ideal of pleasure and the interdiction of law that the subject experiences sexuality. In Lacan's words:

What analytic experience attests to is that castration is what regulates desire, in both normal and abnormal cases. Providing it oscillates by alternating between *S/* and *a* in fantasy, castration makes of fantasy a chain that is both supple and inextensible by which the fixation of object cathexis, which can hardly go beyond certain natural limits, takes on the transcendental function of ensuring the *jouissance* of the Other that passes this chain on to me in the Law [...] Castration means that *jouissance* has to be refused in order to be attained on the inverse scale of the Law of desire (Lacan 2006c: 700).

Thus, even with the instinctive field affected by the impulses of both life and death instincts, in psychoanalysis the regulation of sexuality still works in terms of the repressive hypothesis (Foucault 1978: 112-114). It is precisely this idea that Foucault cannot accept. According to him, to really understand the very complex relationship between sex and power in modernity, it is essential to go beyond this psychoanalytic thesis that the subjective field of sexuality can only be defined by the simple opposition between desire and its interdiction—an opposition that is known as the repressive hypothesis of psychoanalysis.

For Foucault, power is not originally in opposition to instinctive drives, and civilization is not the opposite of sexual liberation. For him, power and sexuality, instincts and civilization belong to the common field of

experience that characterises the complex relationship between subjectivity and sexuality in modern societies (Foucault 1978: 157-159). The confessional device, transgressive literature, and the project of the biological government of the living, all constitute, for Foucault, the biopolitics device of which psychoanalysis is just a little part. What alternatives are there? How can we think of a way of resistance? (Foucault 1978: 94-98).

The erotic art and the care of the self

First, we must consider that when Foucault undertakes a critique of the repressive model of sexuality and extends this critique to the psychoanalytic theory of desire that he is using a certain conception of subjectivity (Foucault 1994d: 813).

According to Foucault, Christianity has forged a particular subject or subjective model in Western society that is quite different from those of ancient or non-Western societies (Foucault 1978: 58; Foucault 2013: 38-40). The subject that begins with Christianity is one who must undertake the constant practice of self-knowledge and examination of conscience. With Tertullian's invention of Original Sin between the second and third centuries, it became imperative for the subject to search for something evil in his own mind and body (Foucault 1994e: 306-307; Foucault 2012b: 122). The theory of Original Sin is the genealogical precursor to the detailed examination of the self, which did not exist before in the same form. All of the ancient spiritual practices of the subject's relationship with himself and others became mediated by individual and collective suspicion of the presence of evil. This is the foundation of subjective interiority and the reflective subject of consciousness (Davidson 2013: 70).

The second characteristic of the modern subject's genealogy is that this subjectivity was structurally constituted by the mediation of the Other (Foucault 2012a: 136-138). If in ancient Greece there was a relationship between master and disciple around the horizontal and immanent axes, with Christianity this relationship will definitely pass to the vertical and transcendental plan. The master becomes someone who is omniscient, omnipresent, and transcendent. In this new structure, what remains to the disciple in terms of subjective possibility is only the process of resignation and complete delivery to the master figure (Foucault 2012a: 108-110). Thus, the transcendence of the Other is the other side of the examination of conscience.

Finally, when modernity abandoned this reference to the transcendent presence of the Other in order to constitute the subject as an autonomous

individual and independent living being, this same procedure also established a human transcendent figure (Foucault 1994m: 311-317). This is Foucault's hypothesis of the anthropological silence in modernity and of the humanist dogmatic thought, present since Kant's philosophy until modern existentialism (Foucault 2007: 122-124). The relationship of the subject with themselves and others presupposes the hermeneutic practices of Christianity and the new humanist model of knowledge that we call human science and existentialism.

But while, in Foucault's view, there was a true opposition between the self-knowledge and the care of the self in ancient Greece (Foucault 2005: 1-19), in fact, the perspective of self-knowledge was not prevalent at that time. There was of course the Socratic imperative of, 'Know thyself', but common in popular and social practices was not the knowledge model of the relationship with the self, but a technology of care (Foucault 1994d: 786). To make one's life potential material for a work of art, to forge one's existence to create an aesthetic experience: this was such a different technology of the self that we really have difficulty imagining it now.

What Foucault wants to emphasize in *The Will to Knowledge* by drawing this central opposition between the hermeneutic model of the self and the ancient practice of care is the real possibility of creating another kind of relationship between the subject, himself, and others (Foucault 1986: 67-68). Now, if we follow Foucault's (1978: 57-58) description of erotic art as representative of this model of a non-Western sexuality, he posits a relationship between truth and sex, where truth would be drawn from pleasure itself. Truth would be obtained by the very simple experience of pleasure, present in the meeting of bodies itself, without needing to be legitimized by an external law. It would not be evaluated by the opposition between the permitted and the forbidden, or by a criterion of utility.

By considering its intensity and duration, its specific quality, the reverberations of pleasure in the body and the soul, erotic art would be constituted as another kind of knowledge of sexuality; its validity could only be ensured insofar as it was articulated with sexual practice itself, shaping it as though from within and amplifying its effects (Foucault 1978: 57). This *ars erotica* would not assume, beyond the pleasure experience itself, the form of a universal knowledge of sex, as in the case of the *scientia sexualis*. Evidently it would be a marked and constituted knowledge that followed a tradition, which would be carefully and secretly transmitted through a specific relation between master and disciple. The master, holder of its secrets, would be the one responsible for transmitting the virtuous knowledge of the erotic art, under the model of initiation in which both the disciple's experience

and its development would be guided, ritualistically and without fail. The effects of this masterful art, according to Foucault, as well as the benefits of its use and transmission, would be evident: they should 'transfigure the one fortunate enough to receive its privileges: an absolute mastery of the body, a singular bliss, obliviousness to time and limits, the elixir of life, the exile of death and its threats' (Foucault 1978: 58).

It is around this other model of the production of truth about sex that Foucault finds the development of an art that, at first glance, remains completely foreign to modern societies. While the *ars erotica* remains present in other traditions of society, while it remains idealized in relation to a whole set of different moral precepts that is also present in these societies, it must be said that modern Western society does not possess an erotic art. When Foucault places the sexual science of today in opposition with the ancient idea of eroticism present in both Greece and some non-Western societies (Foucault 1994b: 390), he wants to introduce another ethical and political subjective principle to the experience of sexuality. Indeed, according to this principle, the most important thing about sexuality would not be self-knowledge, as a cognitive model of the subject's relationship with the self, but the dimension of pleasure itself as a form of self-care and care of the other (Foucault 1994a: 729; Foucault 2013: 44-45).

This does not mean that eroticism is not affected by power and its forms of domination in non-Western societies. There is still a very specific kind of relationship between master and disciple in these forms of erotic art that cannot completely break from the hierarchical positions and relationships of domination in the social experience (Foucault 1978: 57-58). For Foucault, the point of studying these forms of erotic art is the examination of the relationship between subjectivity and sexuality, which does not involve the Occidental opposition between self-examination and the transcendence of the Other, or the reductive distinction between repressive power and sexual liberation. For Foucault, erotic art would be a very direct way of opening up to an immanent experience with oneself and with the otherness of the Other (Foucault 1990: 236-246; Foucault 2013: 44-45), inasmuch as it would not be subject to the disciplinary system of the individualization of bodies—as in the panoptic model of the architecture of the cities—or to a biopolitics of the population that is oriented according to procedures of the control and management of sexuality. The practical criterion for this experience of eroticism would not be the universal element of the knowledge, but what Foucault calls the care of the self, a new subjective model that is closer to an immanent perspective of ethics and politics than to a transcendental and humanist one. Hence, to propose, as Foucault himself does, the existence

of another kind of erotic tradition in the East in which the use of pleasures could be articulated with the notion of care of the self, it would be necessary to think of an idea of pleasure that means nothing other than:

An event, an event that happens, I would say, outside the subject, or at the limit of the subject, or between two subjects, in this something that is neither of the body nor of the soul, neither outside nor inside—don't we have here, in trying to reflect a bit on this notion of pleasure, a means of avoiding the entire psychological and medical armature that was built into the traditional notion of desire? (Foucault 2011: 389-390).

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4. Elective Spaces

Creating Space to Care

Karan August

Abstract

It is possible to see the city as a chaotic and organic coalition of juxtaposed forms, containing remnants of past generations' dreams and disappointments. However, on the socio-political scale, a rhythm of collective ordering continuously gains momentum without the need for conjuring hidden committees or transcendent laws. The philosopher Hubert Dreyfus provides a useful insight into the overly echoed threat of Friedrich Nietzsche's theory of eternal return of the same, noting that in the current epoch, 'technicity [...] eliminates the marginal practices on the basis of which new worlds could be disclosed and dooms us to what Nietzsche already saw as the eternal return of the same' (Dreyfus 2003: 17). Theorists often employ the fear of forever reliving the same existence as the most poetic of warnings and yet with the vagueness of recalling a dream. There is something immediate for us today in Nietzsche's doctrine from a century ago. As the patterns of socio-political organization spin upon their axes, habits and emerging ways for individuals to live as themselves and each other are pulled within the form, categorized, labelled, stamped and stowed, stabilizing all practices and avoiding shifts to other styles of existence. This chapter focuses on the role of architecture in motivating the care to create new worlds.

Keywords: elective space, aesthetic event, free beauty

Context of the care of the self

A canonical, philosophical means to resist the eternal return of the same is through a non-derivative, explicit, intentionally, and electively sought

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practice of care. The diverse methods for the care of the self as taught by different philosophers share a basic structure. It is a trifold effort: first, unsettling categorical knowledge; second, having the experience of a primordial paradox which unsettles non-conceptual coping methods; and finally, engaging systems with thriving subjective purposiveness. This threefold structure is my own abstraction of the historically echoed art of the care of the self. The subject matter here is the role of architecture in this trifold effort of care.

The hope of side-stepping a life of merely playing out the roles and rules defined by others is a longstanding issue in philosophy, and although Michel Foucault's genealogy may use a wider comb than most historians would like, it seems fair to grant his assertion that the practices of the 'care of the self' emerged as a core philosophical concern by the time of Socrates. At base, Foucault's historical account claims that subjectivity formally emerged in the discussions of Socrates and Plato and advances to the current normalizing epoch through a series of actions through Christian institutions' employment of the care of the self techniques which morphed into pastoral power (as discussed in Martins, this volume). While power is defined as 'actions upon actions working throughout a social network of relations', pastoral power is defined as 'actions upon individuals' actions towards their own thoughts and desires' (Foucault 1993). In other words, normalization arrived on the wings of derivative and corrupted practices of care of the self; is implicit and non-electively executed through political, social, historical, and economic power relations; and is manifest in bad architecture.

Architecture manifests surroundings that provide boundaries between what is and what could be. We inhabit the spaces created by and for our predecessors and learn the order of things: our behaviours, movements, how far we can push, and how much there is to work with. We live with each other in the buildings and cities we construct, and we structure our movements within the possibilities these spaces afford.

Architects are a meeting point between intentional actions to improve urban environments, the drive to innovate in art, and economic determinism. Ideas slip into architectural thinking like diet fads; suddenly everyone is eating egg-white omelettes but no one can justify why.¹ Cities are left with monolithic sculptures devoted to the egos of star architects or incorporated

1 As an aside, the whole egg is one of the most complete, healthy, and well-packaged foods available (McGee 2007: 68-117).

greed. Limited resources are exploited and we are left to adapt to failed experiments.²

The built form reflects the power relations among collections of people who engage with urban landscapes. The affect of normalizing practices manifest in our loss of embodied mobility and increasing forgetfulness or generalized memories as the lived landscape is increasingly constricted and standardized. Such structures afford thin and limited engagement; they are spaces that present an immediate and unalterable hierarchy of perception and that can be labelled, identified, and classified without playful compositions. I think of monoculture buildings, floor plans, and interiors; rooms with composite floors covered by photographs of wood, with tables made of polyamide which cannot be cared for nor age gracefully; an abundance of colonizing objects which pop up quickly to enliven (i.e., return life to) the fossilized forms, but that can overpower the space if a new diversity is not established; windows that cannot be opened and ventilating systems sifting chemically modified air; and spaces where predators alone have the advantages of concealment, vistas, access, acoustics, and so forth. Architecture erected on the Vitruvian principles of man's capacity to impose an abstracted rational will upon all matter leads to spaces where non-human life is taken as subservient, where matter is formed to be abused and rejected from the loop, warranting patterns of inharmonious habits. These dissolutions reinforce each other, leading to an ever greater de-valuation of material forms, our own mobility, and our ability to respond to present situations. Architects design from their imagination and knowledge; if they too are caught up in normalization, how can they design spaces that value the vibrancy that material forms present?

In his later work, Michel Foucault sought to call attention to a web of power relations that cause normalization at the level of truth itself via the historically evolving practices of pastoral powers and the truth-teller i.e., the *parresia* (παρρησία) – also sometimes translated as ‘speaking truth to power’.³ Foucault first historically contextualized normalization as the process of subjectification by the Other (what he labelled trans-subjectification), and then by indicating a signal method of resistance as subjectification by the self (self-subjectification). This room for resistance emerged in his final return to philosophy, with his research regarding the care of the self—seen mainly in the second and third volumes of *The History of Sexuality* and in

2 For an excellent discussion regarding alternative possibilities to the shortcomings of merely novel design and the need to build for ‘lived spatiality’, see Perez-Gomez 2012.

3 In particular, see the lecture of 12 January 1983 (Foucault 2010: 61-74).

his later lectures at the Collège de France from 1979–1984 (Foucault 2012, 2011; 2010; 2008; 2003; 2001; 1993; 1990; 1988).

It should be acknowledged that the majority of secondary literature on Foucault critiques him as overly pessimistic and deterministic in claiming that all individuals are subject to an all-encompassing web of power in which he offers no room for resistance (Habermas 1987: 286; Turner 1994; Pickett 1996; Hacking 1986: 235–240; Dreyfus and Rabinow 2003: 109–121; Taylor 1989: 67–101; Bahr 1988: 101). For instance, the otherwise excellent scholar Nancy Love's sharp analysis of the problem states: 'Once Foucault defines subjectivity as subjugation, where can he turn for resistance?' (1989: 277). However, these critics fail to take Foucault's discussion of self-subjectification into account. It should further be noted that Foucault's trans-subjectification is nothing akin to Gadamer's 'trans-subjective event' in which a subject changes their disposition towards the larger community.⁴

Foucault's later interest in care of the self has been attributed by Arnold Davidson to the influence of philosophical historian Pierre Hadot, who held the Chair of History in Greek and Roman Thought at the Collège de France (Davidson 1990: 482). Hadot's *magnum opus*, developed over decades, found that philosophy as formalizing in the period of Socrates was a practice of the art of living or a way of life (Hadot 2009; 2006; 2004; 1998; 1995).

Practices of care of the self are generally forms of self-control and meditation with the aim of self-improvement, situated within a systematic understanding of the good life. Davidson stylistically captures this practice as a 'spiritual combat with oneself, aimed at a total transformation of one's way of being' (1990: 477). In other words, philosophical practices of care are various styles of spiritually directed practices of examining one's thinking via sets of practical exercises (within this context, the term 'spiritual' conveys the idiosyncratic will of an individual). With normalization, the drive to cultivate the self is manipulated by established, yet evolving, power relations that have been successful at maintaining the influence of those in charge, and the individual's struggle becomes confined to derivative human power relations, rather than the wider material context.

The possibility of 'self-subjectification' is the key aspect of Foucault's work I draw upon here. This has been further developed and refined by scholars, notably by Judith Butler, Nancy Fraser, and Rosi Braidotti (Butler 1997; Fraser 2003; Braidotti 1994). Foucault argued that though it is not common, it is possible and desirable to form an idiosyncratic and aesthetic identity. Along these lines, Foucault sought to conceptually contextualize

4 For further discussion, see: Davey 2013, Section 5. Alternatively see: Veyne 1993.

our own embeddedness in a swarm of power, slavery, or inauthenticity for those already interested in the pursuit of aesthetic emancipation. In other words, Foucault 'insisted that his critical discourse commanded neither him nor anybody else to engage in such a struggle, but it could help an individual who already had such a commitment to better undertake the struggle' (O'Leary 2002: 156).

In the 30 years since Foucault's research, it has become more apparent that the dominant position of traditional states of governance have been challenged by various transnational corporations.⁵ The monetization of data provides small groups of people (those who have the most powerful computers or access to the information collected) with cost-effective and far-reaching means of manipulating the larger population (Lanier 2010; 2000). Foucault's observation that power is most dangerous when it goes underground or becomes invisible seems only more relevant today (Foucault 2001). The shift from the government to the market serves as an example of an historically based theory of normalization. International corporations have sufficient resources, opportunities, and potential to benefit by executing pastoral power in a contemporary and more encompassing version of earlier states' practices of such power relations and those of the church before them. The behavioural effect of normalising practices can be witnessed in the increasing constriction and standardization of individuals' physical and imaginative skills.⁶

Normalization thrives in historically embedded, societal structuring with evolving truth-telling practices and corrupted teachings/practices of care of the self. This is implicitly and non-electively executed through political, social, historical, and economic power relations, and is manifested in derivative, bad architecture as fossilized blocks of power that avert the imagination away from playfulness. I suggest that the means to resist this problematic situation is through non-derivative, explicit, intentional, and electively sought-after practices of care. The argument pursued within this chapter suggests that some spaces afford practices of care better than others; I name these types of spaces 'elective space'. What qualities of a material space can facilitate one to elect to care for one's self?

5 For further consideration of this proposition, see Hertz 2002.

6 It should be noted that I take this division between the physical and imaginative skills of the body purely as a practical shorthand for the far richer commonality between skills. However, the embodiment of intentionality is outside the perimeters of this research. For further discussion on the topic, see August 2012: 293-312 (in which I draw the connection between the understanding of embodied intentionality and architecture), as well as Dreyfus 2005, Dreyfus 2001, and Kelly 2005.

Canonical care

In antiquity, philosophers often found themselves belonging to a school or sect that refined and taught a particular style of comportment and self-development. For example, Platonism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism (introduced in Bracken, this volume) all offered direct tutorship in what was considered the ideal way of behaving and living through the use of key philosophical texts to which each generation could add.⁷ In modern philosophy, philosophers are more often studied as individuals, with their respective secondary literatures considered interpretive aids and critiques, rather than composing an essential element of the philosopher's argument. In this sense the majority of modern philosophy has radically changed its role in society from its earlier practice. Hadot mostly dedicated his energies to understanding the ancient philosophies of the care of the self, however he extends his analyses of philosophy as the practice of teaching an art of living to a few modern philosophers. In particular, Hadot reads Merleau-Ponty's return to phenomena as calling the reader to transform their perception of the world, which is the same shift that ancient philosophers sought through practicing spiritual exercises.

To care for the self, or, to use other terms, to cultivate, develop, mature, authenticate, emancipate, self-subjectivate; to become nimble, free, enlightened, mature, authentic, ethical, native, or prepared for death, has seemingly endless differentiations, adaptations, and corruptions throughout the human record (Bennett 1990, Davidson 1990, Dreyfus 2003, Fleming 2002, Foucault 2012, Foucault 1990a, Foucault 1990b, Kant 2000, Kelly 2005, Lord 2012,

7 Platonism was founded with the teachings of Socrates (469-399 BCE) and Plato (429-347 BCE). Stoicism is generally considered to be founded by Zeno of Citium in Cyprus (344-262 BCE), Cleanthes (d. 232 BCE), or Chrysippus (d. c. 206 BCE); however, it was later, during the Roman Empire that Seneca the Younger (c. 1 BCE-65 CE), Epictetus (c. 50-135 CE) and Marcus Aurelius (121-180 CE) popularized the philosophy and emphasized the doctrines central to the early Stoics' teachings. Epicurus (341-270 BCE) was born in Samos and died in Athens. He studied at Plato's Academy when it was run by Xenocrates. Later, when he joined his family on Colophon, Epicurus studied under Nausiphanes, who introduced him to the philosophy of Democritus. In 306-307 Epicurus bought a house in Athens, which had the famed garden where he taught his philosophy. Epicurus and his followers, who included slaves and women, secluded themselves from the life of the city. While Epicurus may have written as many as 300 books, only portions of *Principal Doctrines*, *Vatican Sayings*, three letters, and some other fragments have survived. Cicero, Seneca, Plutarch, and Lucretius provide some information, but most of what else is known about Epicurus comes from Diogenes Laertius. His account shows controversy surrounded the philosopher's lifestyle and ideas. It is also interesting to note that more recently Thomas Jefferson practiced as an Epicurean. His 1819 'Letter to William Short' points out the shortcomings of other philosophies and the virtues of Epicureanism; the letter also contains a short syllabus of the doctrines of Epicurus (Jefferson 1903).

Merleau-Ponty 1962, Ravaisson 2008). Regardless of the permutations, the hope of freeing oneself via care immediately assumes three claims: there is a style in which one should live (the aim); there is a way of approaching this aim; and it is possible to live without reaching the aim. Each technique of freeing oneself has a different emphasis and means of practice and, perhaps most importantly, different ethical 'truths' with which the trap is baited—promises of the way one will eventually live, after following the relevant advice. However, the practice is always to free oneself of any pre-told truths, regardless of the assumption that doing so ought to naturally lead to the same outcomes encountered by the teachers.

For example, the ethical truths that Immanuel Kant employs to lure his readers are the three maxims on the aim of human intentional action. Kant's three maxims which he asserts are 'common to human understanding' are: to think for oneself; to think from the position of everyone else; to always think in accord with oneself (Kant 2000: 174). These are the qualities of 'unprejudiced', 'broad-minded', and 'consistent' thinking (Kant 2000: 293). An individual whose thinking is unprejudiced, broad-minded, and consistent is free, mature, and lives in the present material moment; this aim is achieved through cultivating reflective judgment—which is Kant's means of canonical care for the self. This method of care of the self requires the individual to work through various contemplations and engagements so that they can come to their own accounting of ethical behaviour. However, it would be a surprise if ethical behaviour were not revealed to be a commonly held disposition to the world amongst most aims of care, i.e., a temperament of being an individual freed from false tutelage to superstitions or fossilized categorical knowledge such that one may engage the material presence afresh and without prejudice.

The diverse methods of care of the self, though taught by different philosophers, share a basic structure. It is a trifold effort: first, unsettling categorical knowledge; second, having experiences of a primordial paradox that unsettle non-conceptual coping methods; and third, enacting a disposition of unconcealment. This trifold structure of the historically echoed art of cultivating one's self is my own abstraction, based primarily on my studies of Hadot, Foucault, Braidotti, Merleau-Ponty, Bennett, Heidegger, Kant, Lucretius, Seneca the Younger, and Charles Taylor. Hadot, Foucault, and Taylor explicitly discuss the historical art of the care of the self, while the others offer primary means of practice.⁸ My abstraction

8 This is still a work in progress, as I would also like to claim that movements need to reoccur frequently, in what I call 'echoing epiphanies', and that such practices have more success in

of this trifold structure is a conceptual device aimed at uncovering a reverberant pattern inherent to the didactic theory of care, and thereby leading to a means of resistance to normalization. Normalization is a corrupted and implicitly practiced derivation of the care of the self. Practicing the care of the self explicitly helps to research something beyond the social-historical-political-economic trends of the moment. In turn, this should help uncover the means of motivating architectural practices of care. In other words, architects ought to both practice care of the self and create spaces that afford others the opportunity to practice their own care of the self.

This reading of Kant's *Critique of Judgment* argues that one must act *as if* all matter is subjectively purposive because doing so frees the individual to have a disposition of *unconcealment*, i.e., to freely or authentically engage with life—'unconcealment' in the sense of: 'We shall set before ourselves the concept of duty, which contains that of a good will though under certain subjective limitations and hindrances, which, however, far from concealing it and making it unrecognisable, rather bring it out by contrast and make it shine forth all the more brightly' (Kant 1996: 397). One way of manifesting this is by providing architecture that is both an end and a means in itself: acting in a style sensitive towards the material presence and the techniques of nature. The manner in which the object's parts relate to each other as a system demands further recognition, which the parts' relations may lead to an architectural object that is closer to a product of nature than a malformed artefact (Kant 2000: 186 § 45 5:307).

I have found Kant's account of experiences of care to be the most comprehensive, because care of the self is a reworking of the way we think and engage. To understand how such a reworking can happen we must have a structure of how thinking might happen—and Kant expressed a keen interest in both. Kant's philosophy illustrates a system of cognition that positions aesthetic experiences as the second and third acts of care of the self and leads to a freed individual embedded in a more-than-human world.

Kant explicitly discusses the need for individuals to attempt 'to cultivate their own minds' in the newspaper submission 'An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?' (1784), with the emergent motto of 'Dare to know!'

one's own milieu—this is something that comes out of my current research on Julia Morgan, particularly her intellectual circle in Paris and the San Francisco Bay Area during the Progressive Era (1890-1920).

He also discusses it in the essay ‘What Does it Mean to Orient Oneself in Thinking?’ (Kant 1996: 41), where he states:

Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-imposed immaturity. Immaturity is the inability to use one’s own understanding without guidance from another. This immaturity is self-imposed when its cause lies in lack of understanding, but lack of resolution and courage to use it without the guidance of another. *Sapere Aude!* ‘Have courage to use your own understanding!’—that is the motto of enlightenment (Kant 1983: 41).

Kant worries that without the gumption to break away from immaturity, people can remain in the slave-like state of not thinking for themselves because society is set up so that previous and dominant thinkers inform the majority of people about even the simplest knowledge needed to survive. Kant asserts, ‘If I have a book to serve as my understanding, a pastor to serve as my conscience, a physician to determine my diet for me, and so on, I need not exert myself at all’ (1983: 41). Beyond the explaining and scheduling of these simple aspects of life, people have no need to ask about anything else past the lines drawn by these ‘guardians’ (Kant 1983: 41). When an individual’s actions are based on the requests of others, their actions are not free—and there is also no knowledge about anything the guardians wish to suppress. Such a system results in a lack of possibilities other than those placed before each individual, which is what Kant calls immaturity. Foucault later echoes Kant’s structure of immaturity and daring to know in his theories around trans- and self-subjectification and the webs of power sustained through truth-telling practices; in fact, he turned to Kant as a primary source that addressed such questions in the greatest of depth (Foucault 1982: 784).⁹

Politically influenced by Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who argued that all people—not just geniuses—needed to advance, Kant directed his energies toward a didactic theory that would be applicable for all people.¹⁰ I would like

9 For further analysis of Foucault’s turn to Kant, see: Pryor 2002: 320, Bahr 1988; O’Leary 2002; Healy 2003: 138.

10 Goldthwait asserts in the introduction to Kant’s *Observations on the Feeling of the Beautiful and the Sublime*, that Kant ‘states that Rousseau made him respect the masses; not the genius alone but all men are necessary to the progress of humankind’ (Kant 1960: 11). For further contextualization of self-development through education and nature as examined through the theories of French thinkers such as Etienne Bonnot de Condillac, Helvetius, Jean le Rond d’Alembert, Diderot, Marie-Jean-Antoine-Nicolas Caritat, Marquis de Condorcet, the Physiocrats, the Ideologues, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and their English counterparts, John Locke, David Hume, James Mill, and Jeremy Bentham, see Holmes 2008.

to read Kant as seeking a means by which he could contribute to the world, as together the three *Critiques* strategically compose a didactic theory for the care of the self. Admittedly this reading is an outlier, as the predominance of Kantian scholarship tackles the first *Critique* independent of the others. As Ian Hunter aptly notes: ‘The greater obstacle to approaching Kant’s moral philosophy as a way of life, however, comes from the fact that both its friends and its enemies insist on its formal (or formalistic) character’ (Hunter 2002: 909). When the *Critiques* are seen from a motivational angle, the trilogy takes on a radically alternative meaning compared to the predominant scholarly trend of emphasising the importance of the pursuit of rationality for freedom—most likely due to over-emphasis on the first *Critique* and a relative lack of discourse around the third.¹¹

In short, the *Critique of Pure Reason* seeks to limit people’s claims of knowledge so that the messy art of metaphysics can be practiced. This is Kant’s first act of care of the self: he claims that the practice of care of the self is impossible without separating the ideas of reason from the concepts of the understanding (Kant 2001: 64). For example, Kant rids his reader of the desire to find the transcendent as an element of knowledge. The transcendent may be reached through faith, imagination, hope, card games, tea leaves, and the like—but these ideas can never be taken as knowledge, for knowledge must have a sensory basis. Therefore no one (including the church, state, or market) may have a greater claim to knowledge of the transcendent.

In the first *Critique*, Kant is passionately striving to free his reader from fossilized categorical knowledge and overly enthusiastic rationalizations. In providing a systematic structure to existence, he stretches cognition to its limits and pauses there to draw the reader’s attention to very definite boundaries, freeing them from the arid knowledge that bars them from development and miss-prepares them for engaging with the world as it exists in continuous flux.

By thus setting up the faculties of the human mind and systematically drawing out the principles necessarily assumed to survive in the everyday world (Kant’s first principles of metaphysics), he demonstrates that some commonly held beliefs are merely figments masquerading as knowledge. For instance, Kant finds ideas such as the nominal soul, transcendent god, or Man’s supremacy to all forms of life to be transcendent ideas (as opposed to

11 Although it should be noted that there are some very respectable exceptions in recent decades that have brought insightful scholarship regarding Kant’s later critical period (Ginsborg 2013; 2011; Lord 2010; Brann 2011; Robinson 2012; 2011).

transcendentals) that can be hypothesized but not known, as such.¹² These ideas are products of reason untethered to the confines of knowledge. The faculty of reason can produce a wide range of possibilities that go beyond the reach of knowledge. Ideas of the faculty of reason are not ideas of what one knows. In this way the faculty of reason can free the understanding of the otherwise necessary bondage that knowledge emerging from the faculty of the understanding has to experience. In other words, reason can extend ideas beyond the purely empirical, but only at the cost of rendering those ideas illusory.

Kant's attempt to limit the reach of reason in the first *Critique* corresponds to the canonical first act of care of the self: through analytical study, one becomes aware that something is awry or not quite matching up—at the least, that one's own knowledge of the world is not comprehensive or infallible. However, the care of the self acknowledges that just because one can analytically understand an argument, that understanding does not entail that one is actually moved to change habits. Think of any bad habit: knowing abstractly that it is unhealthy or unsafe is not the same as witnessing first-hand the disconnection between the habit and pleasure (for example, using a mobile phone while walking or driving through a city is a bad habit, but knowing this via abstracted reason is not as motivating of change as witnessing a person being run-over because their attention was on the phone rather than the street).

In the third *Critique*'s introduction, Kant positions the faculty of judgment as bridging 'the great gulf' between the concepts of nature and freedom (Kant 1987: 195). The presence of aesthetic horizons and objects afford the opportunity to exercise the skill to judge reflectively. In the second part of the third *Critique*, Kant argues that we must act *as if* a circular causal relationship between means and ends (whereby the means cause the ends and the ends ground the means) is a transcendental principle, while at the

12 For Kant's discussion of the transcendental, see Kant 1929: 327. Some terms are important: 'transcendental' means that if all human beings died, the principles discovered would still hold true and govern the world. Thus, 'transcendental principles' are not 'our' principles, as they govern regardless of our awareness of them. We are fortunate that through history our culture has been able to figure out a few of them, to a degree of reliability. Transcendental truths are generally thought of as natural truths. '*A priori* principles' are basically the same thing, but in cultural practice the term is a bit more plastic, and broader than 'transcendental'. '*A priori*' means we do not have to empirically validate the claim to know its truth; we know it through thinking about it. 'Universality' means that in all situations where this thing occurs, it will be true, i.e., the idea holds true in all situations where it occurs. Furthermore, generally examples of universal truths are 'constructed truths': truths that we grant as an account of something that necessarily cannot be discovered via the experience of all the possible cases.

same time acknowledging that we can never know this to be true. This teleological relationship is the grounding for a reflective power of judgment that is capable of engaging with, but never fully understanding, the vibrant and reverberant world. In the end, the closest we come to lifting the veil of Isis is in the aesthetic event.¹³

The second and third acts of the canonical care of the self in Kant's account are two different types of aesthetic events (also called aesthetic judgments). More precisely, the second act—having experiences of a primordial paradox which unsettle non-conceptual coping methods—is an experience of the sublime. The third act—whereby the individual becomes a part of the system with thriving subjective purposiveness—is engagement with beauty.

In the second book of part one of the third Critique, called the *Analytic of the Sublime* (sections 23-29; 244-278 of the third Critique), Kant demonstrates a way to think about the sublime as a subcategory of an aesthetic event or judgement. This is a judgment that humbles human cognitive powers. To be clear, sublime horizons are not merely those of wild or raw wildness, such as those conjured by images of the Australian outback, Antarctic landscape, China's mountainous interior, or the European Alps. The sublime that Kant calls upon is that which affords more than a human mind can comprehend, even though all aspects of the sublime horizon may be apprehended. In other words, it is not something that is beyond human senses (such as ultraviolet light), but rather something that our embodied systems of cognition cannot grasp as a whole. In this judgment (or cognitive engagement) our mind tries to grasp it, but cannot: it is this failed attempt that both humbles and enlivens via the will to try. Kant argues that, in the sublime, aesthetic judgment an individual experiences first-hand is a fundamental paradox, which unsettles their conceptual framework of existence and readies them for the next act: engaging beauty.

Kant is careful to distinguish between two types of beauty: a beauty free of socially accepted norms; and the beauty we come to expect of certain things as shaped by our upbringing. Kant divided these types of beauty into the categories of 'free' and 'adherent', distinguished based on the notion of an 'interest in the object'. Free beauty has no concept of what the object ought to be. His examples of free beauty include flowers, birds (along with their colourful plumage), crustaceans, foliage (in borders or wallpaper), and music fantasias (Kant 2000: 229). Adherent beauty has a concept of the perfection of the object's form or what it ought to be, and presupposes the

13 For a rigorous and nuanced argument supporting these claims, please see my forthcoming monograph *Building Beauty with Kant: An Aesthetic Rehabilitation* (London, Bloomsbury).

object's end. Kant's examples are humans, horses, and buildings (Kant 2000: 230). Because adherent beauty contains a presupposed end, the individual's reflection upon the object's various vantage points in the causal nexus is unbalanced (as the end vantage point is artificially favoured). This resonates with Charles Murray's identifying of the Aristotelian concept of every object having an end and an excellence, as highlighted in Chapter 1 of this volume. For example, in an extended endnote or 'general remark' on the section, Kant notes that the regularity of the garden will please the visitor at first but once the regularity of the order has been understood, the pleasure garden will no longer entertain the visitor, but 'rather impose upon the imagination a burdensome constraint, whereas nature, which is extravagant in its varieties to the point of opulence, subject to no coercion from artificial rules, could provide his taste with lasting nourishment' (Kant 2000: 126). This unbalanced quality of adherent beauty hinders the power of reflecting or judging, unless the individual is either ignorant of the normative hierarchies of the idealized forms, or able to intentionally bracket off the social-economic-historical-political concept of ends. It is an object's inherent teleological relationship (a relationship that rests on a circular movement between the means and ends) that evokes aesthetic events. Here we see that adherent beauty's teleological relationship is unbalanced because of its focus upon ends; such objects are not harmonious and do not express free beauty, or motivate care.

Kantian aesthetics considers beauty to be that which is afforded by harmonious causal nexuses, which are systems of deep ecological balance. Thus aesthetics is not the study of specific types of subjective pleasures derived from art; it is the study of what objectively informs our subjective awareness of art. Some things are beautiful, some are not.

Free beauty is both the act of judging something that captivates us without the promise of personal benefit and the awakening of an event of reflecting judgment. Beauty is our expression of what Kant calls the techniques of nature. Beauty interweaves its perceiver within an all-encompassing causal nexus. As beauty is primordial, it is our guide to that which thrives, regardless of the normative determining concepts of a given political, economic, or historical regime. That which affords an aesthetic event is that which expresses its subjective teleological relationship, and in an aesthetic event the individual judges that expression. In this way, beauty is not subjective and based on the individual beholder, it is something that exists independent of the perceiver.

The practices of care of the self promise to resist the problems of what Foucault called normalization. While differing techniques are prescribed by

various philosophies, each version includes the threefold process of: freeing oneself from arid knowledge via logical exercises; embodied engagements with fundamental paradoxes, such as death/life, infinity/finitude, and the sublime; and becoming witness to harmonious patterns of being—such as a beautiful object. Although the act of mandating that people practice a care of the self is vulnerable to corruption, there may be room to motivate more care of the self via teaching, thinking, and the practice of architecture. Should architects practice care of the self and then design spaces that afford the care of the self to others by incorporating embodied engagement with fundamental paradoxes and harmonious patterns, in what I have called ‘elective spaces’? If they did, perhaps more people might be motivated to break free from acting *as if* the dominating systems of derivative human categorical knowledge are the primary means of being.

In short, Kant’s approach to the care of the self spans his critical works, with the first *Critique* composing logical exercises that limit one’s sphere of possible knowledge, the second *Critique* providing the promise of good life practices, and the third demonstrating a logical account of the encounters that motivate individual transformation and the cultivation of one’s cognitive engagement with the world. These engagements (or, to draw on the words of Davison as discussed above, these *combats*) prompt conversion through the awe of sublime horizons and beautiful objects.

Care of the self

Care of the self ought to lead to individuals learning and relearning to embody habits of engaging with the world in which categorical laws are derivative aids of being. The space to promote ethical habits affords a richer engagement of autonomy within a wider system of nature than those that promote abstracted, categorical laws as a primacy of perception. A key component of this process is access to, and design of, elective spaces (August 2013).¹⁴ I have coined the term ‘elective space’ to convey the type of area, space, structure, building, or venue that an individual has no requirement to consume, engage in labour at, or reside in—i.e., it is not a place where one *must* go; it is a non-market-led place one may *choose* to go. Some examples of elective spaces are

¹⁴ The term ‘Elective Space’ was first introduced in my PhD Thesis at TU Delft: Karan August, ‘Building Beauty: Kantian aesthetics in a time of dark ecology’. (2013), section 1.2: 54–83. It was further refined via an invited lecture: ‘Aesthetic Emancipation; Lifting the veil of Iris with care’. Guest lecture at KTH, Royal Institute of Technology, Stockholm, 2016.

art galleries, museums, libraries, theatres, retreats, historical monuments, cultural structures, religious structures, sporting structures, cemeteries, national parks, scenic or nature reserves, and city parks. Such spaces are often in the public domain, either publicly or privately owned, and accessible to the public, though often by submitting to certain conditions. Moreover, they are spaces without dominating or stabilized hierarchies. Within such spaces, the elements harmoniously relate to each other as parts within a system with ascending and descending relations. Therefore there is no stagnation of form but rather a fluidity of formation akin to the formal relations between notes that create the atmosphere of music. In such a space one may elect to care for the self—to self-subjectivate, in Foucault's words.

While elective spaces are sympathetic to Foucault's well-known discussion of heterotopias, however there is little overlap. This is because, although Foucault describes two genres of heterotopia, both are segments within a larger system of societal normalizing practices. Elective spaces are for marginal practices that do not partake in normalization, thereby avoiding Nietzsche's warning of the Eternal Return of the Same (Nietzsche 1954, 1974). Elective spaces are not heterotopias.

In Foucault's popular 1967 lecture 'Heterotopias: Other Spaces' he states, 'I believe that the anxiety of our era has to do fundamentally with space' (1984). He recognizes a thickness and complexity within the physical form, but his argument's attention is on distinguishing a historical shift in the atmosphere, availability, and liberty granted to visitors of unusual spaces as part of the set of societal roles played out by individual subjects at different times. He contends that a social and political shift has changed the way we deal with transitory periods of life and abnormal behaviour in people. There are two categories of heterotopia: crisis and deviation. The first are spaces set aside to deal with a temporary 'crisis', such as 'adolescents, menstruating women, pregnant women, the elderly', boarding or military schools, and honeymoon deflowerings (Foucault 1984). Individuals visit these various spaces for a fixed and finite stretch of time and then are free to return to society. The worry that Foucault seeks to draw our attention to here is that these 'crisis' heterotopias have been declining and are making way for the second type—the newer, more problematic heterotopias of 'deviation' (Foucault 1984). This type are spaces set apart to more permanently deal with people who behave aberrantly, the spaces of rest homes and psychiatric hospitals, prisons, and 'possibly retirement homes' (Foucault 1984).

This oft-cited short lecture-turned-essay attempts to draw the reader's attention to the historical practices of creating separate spaces for separate activities; hence Foucault's conclusion is that in the past these spaces were

a bit more neutral, in that they existed to house Other behaviour, and that once the individuals went through an unavoidable process of Otherness—the ‘crisis’ period—those same individuals were then allowed back into society. The ‘crisis’ was not a problem within the individual, but instead an exhibition of something inherent in the world. Deviation heterotopias, on the other hand, are employed to confine problematic individuals for a non-fixed period of time. Neither of these two styles of heterotopia affords the individual the opportunity to discard their collective normalized categories of knowledge and skills of judgment (as is the point of an elective space), but instead conform to the individual’s social, political, and economic embeddedness and perpetuate trans-subjectification through the dominating power relations.¹⁵

Elective spaces

Unlike heterotopias, elective spaces are not for a transitional period of crisis or deviation. They are anti-pragmatic, post-anthropocentric spaces. Hence, the ethical engagement with the world emerges as marginalized habits of reaching beyond a market-led, top-down autonomy to a disposition of unconcealing richer engagements and resistance to dominate practices. The affects of normalizing practices are rendered through our loss of embodied intentionality and increasingly simplified or standardized memories as the lived landscape is increasingly constricted and made uniform. This results with architects as a meeting point between intentional actions to improve urban environments, the drive for innovative art, and economic determinism—leaving cities with monolithic sculptures devoted to the egos of Starchitects where limited resources are exploited and we are left to adapt to failed experiments.¹⁶ There is such a thing as bad architecture—architecture that limits the possibilities of individuals and societies. Such architecture wears down the skills of engagement, supports asymmetrical power relationships, and teaches individuals to underperform. It weakens us completely, such that the possibility of overcoming these environments is heroic rather than normal.

As many architects are denizens of contemporary cities, they manifest the key problems of the urban landscape, most importantly the fossilization of monodirectional hierarchical power relations between people, groups,

15 For further discussion of the various perceptions of spaces, see Kleinschmidt 2000.

16 For an excellent discussion regarding possible alternative to the shortcomings of merely novel design and the need to build for ‘lived spatiality’, see Perez-Gomez 2012.

objects, and horizons. In other words, an inharmonious causal nexus of spaces that devour without replenishing or stockpile without use—or, to use Kant's terms, spaces composed of formal relations that do not practice nature's techniques (Kant 2000: 205).

Not just public space

How can a richer engagement and resistance to dominating practices be pursued or achieved? It cannot simply be providing public space. If the aim is to motivate non-hierarchical casual relations, then simply increasing the quantity of people who can gather in a space is insufficient; people will maintain their normalizing practices. What is needed instead is a method of design for embodied judgments. Kant provided a clear and methodological account of using autonomy as a means of rejecting ready-made concepts and reaching through that autonomy to a richer engagement with one's present and material environment: i.e., an individual acting as a mere part within an apprehensible but incomprehensible system. This is a paradox that individuals are able to experience first-hand, without having to rely on the derivative (and often corrupted) teachings of dematerialized dogma.

Most simply put, the second and third acts of the canonical care of the self require certain qualities of physical space. As discussed above, two styles of aesthetic judgment are needed for willing individuals to practice techniques of care: first, aesthetic judgments of the sublime that stretch and humble the individual, revealing their own gumption or willingness to try to comprehend something so vast or terrifying that the individual can merely apprehend a limited fraction of the components; and second, aesthetic judgments of beauty or taste, which are first-hand experiences of the harmonious habits of nature's techniques, along with the individual's own first-hand engagement with and pleasure from echoing such harmony. Aesthetic judgments provide a means of experiencing a super-sensible formative power that affords a disposition of freshly unconcealing material forms and relations.

Sublime horizons and beautiful objects

Elective spaces may afford ethical habits by providing sublime horizons and beautiful objects with which the individual is free to engage or avoid. For example, Le Corbusier and Pierre Jeanneret composed Chandigarh as a city with separate areas for working, living, and caring for the body and

spirit. Elective spaces overlap with the qualities of care for body and spirit. However, the concept of elective spaces excludes spaces that maintain the status quo of the existing state of affairs. That is to say, they are not grocery stores and shopping avenues, regardless of therapeutic properties of such spaces. They are not spaces with the intentional directive of redistributing capital. It may seem inconceivable to claim that any space in the current globalized, market-led, anthropocentric environment can operate without an economic focus; it may seem that one will be forced to retreat to the minimal claim that elective spaces are places where gains in profit margins are not the rationalized priority, but where they still play a role. However, the aim of resistance via marginal practices of employing autonomy to reach a more-than-human world is to cast aside the need to categorize one's individual experiences through the dominating structure. Hence the ability to think of elective spaces as possible is a preliminary step toward resistance.

On a simplistic level, elective spaces are made from parts that do not promote hyper-concept-led thinking—thinking that merely plays out one's position within a web of monodirectional power relations.¹⁷ Drawing upon Kant's account of objects, this understanding of an architectural object grants that each one is a complex system of parts—such as the bricks and mortar, the thresholds, the decorative engravings, the light reaching through windows, the plants growing along the walls, and the people inhabiting the landscape. In this sense, a person is one of the many parts of an architectural object. Let us consider two examples of objects created by architects.

The church of San Miniato al Monte on the southern hillside of Florence above Santo Spirito was built in the Romanesque style from the eleventh to the thirteenth centuries. The interior has carved wooden beams, stone, diffuse sunlight, musty air, unidentified creaks, paint, and iconography from that time. These forms would have been easily readable by the intended population of twelfth-century Tuscans. However, the ravens, owls, and flat faces of the men no longer fluently communicate the importance of their intended dogmas to guests. With time, the architectural object of the San Miniato al Monte has transformed from a space that is necessary for people to visit and one that promotes normalizing power relations, to an elective space of care. The transformation of the object occurs with the change of some of its parts, in this case the human parts. When someone engages with San Miniato al Monte now, the individual may linger in the material forms

17 For elaboration on Kant's account of the structure of cognitive powers in relation to architectural objects, please see my monograph *Building Beauty with Kant: An Aesthetic Rehabilitation* (London, Bloomsbury).

present, and reflect upon an occulting balance or harmony of fluctuating hierarchies, as no one aspect of the building is predominant and demands the attention of the visitor more than any other.

As a radically more contemporary example, consider the evolving collaboration between Rachael Armstrong, Philip Beesley, and their stunningly beautiful and intellectually brilliant architectural projects. Delving into the details of their works, one is easily overwhelmed by the depth and multitude of considerations that synthesize ideas, histories, and questions. More than mere suggestions, they produce delicate, dynamic material systems affording a new reality in architecture, one as radically altered as when the Vitruvian Man stripped the earth to its lateral axis, rendering it inert and sterilized for human reason (Beesley 2011).

In pursuing lines of inquiry into what is beyond the architectural object as the inert Cartesian objects defined by $x, y,$ and z coordinates, Armstrong explores natural computing and dynamic systems in which the components are self-created agents with force and potency of their own and without hierarchy, and yet have transient relations. This new reality offers, in Beesley's words, 'release, interchange and fertility'. Their research points to working with matter, by acknowledging matter's active metabolism, and considering a designed space to be a soil-like structure that is ripe with fertility and renewal.

The material spaces they have created embrace the idea that the suggested shift is from an optimal metaphysics—Beesley discusses this as best embodied by the sphere, with its minimal contact and radical enclosure—and to that of a soil-like, diffusive metaphysics with maximal and radical engagement—an exchange Beesley eloquently illuminates by comparing the raindrop and the snowflake (Beesley 2011). Such space affords the visitor pause from the continued train of determining, categorical judgements. In Kant's aesthetics, beauty is uncategorizable; thus, it can be 'the new' (i.e., that for which humanity has not yet stabilised a collective label or concept) or a beautiful 'object' (a system of parts practicing nature's techniques). At the moment, Armstrong and Beesley's work is unquestionably uncategorizable. It is new. However, I would argue it is also practicing nature's techniques—and, according to Kant, being part of a system practicing nature's techniques seems our best chance yet of relieving the indisputable injustices that dominate our current way of being in the world.

This reading takes Kant's argument within the *Critique of Judgment* to be that one must act *as if* all matter is subjectively purposive because such judgements free the individual to have a disposition of unconcealment, i.e., to freely or authentically engage with life. One way of motivating this is by

providing architecture that is both an ends and a means to itself. Elective spaces are spaces where one is never forced but only chooses to visit and cannot easily stay, just as cultivation itself is something one must elect to undertake. While in an elective space, one is afforded the pleasure of playfully composing the elements offered to cognition, as no hierarchy is dominant.

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5. Interpreting *Dao* (道) between ‘Way-making’ and ‘Be-wëgen’

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Abstract

This chapter is part of a wider research on Daoism in general, and the *Daodejing* (道德經, c. 300 BCE) in particular,¹ which is, most broadly, attempting to establish a philosophy of comparison.² The thesis of this chapter is that philosophy ought always to proceed through comparisons. This is both a theoretical hypothesis and a methodological *praxis* (πρᾶξις, ‘practice’). These two aspects need to be conceived as a singular and yet multifarious movement of thoughts. It is, in fact, only in virtue of this philosophical process of comparisons that one can determine the reference systems that are necessary for the evaluation of one’s own pre-assumptions. The scope, therefore, is not to find equivalences between concepts, as

1 Xiaogan Liu explains that ‘Daoism is a complex term and difficult to define clearly. The Anglicized term was coined in the 1830s by Western scholars working from the pronunciation of the Chinese word *dao* [or *tao*] 道, which literally suggests a path or road, and is extended to indicate approaches, methods, and principles; *dao* has been used this way since antiquity in Chinese political and moral discourse. Aside from these common meanings, the word’s most striking early appearance is in the *Laozi* [老子] (or *Lao-tzu*, *Lao-tze*) or *Daodejing* (or *Tao-te-ching*) [...] Through this work it became a new philosophical term and the seed of a new intellectual and cultural tradition. Sima Qian 司馬遷 (145-86 BCE), drawing on some version of this tradition, invented a new term, *Daojia* [道家] (literally “*dao*-family,” indicating one of six schools of thought in early Han Dynasty), which first appeared in his *Historical Record*. The *Laozi* and a later work entitled *Zhuangzi* [莊子] are conventionally understood to be the most representative texts of Daoism—Daoist philosophy in particular. Thereafter, texts, authors, and ideas similar or related to these two texts, or elements within them, are commonly labelled Daoist. In modern academic discourse, we find that certain ideas have become recognized as standards of Daoism’ (Liu 2015b: 1-2). For further analysis and bibliography of Daoism and *Daodejing*, see Liu’s edited book *Dao Companion to Daoist Philosophy* (Liu (2015a)) and D.C. Lau (1989). Regarding the *Daodejing* and the new documents found in Guodian (郭店) in 1993, along with the relative problems of authorship and periodisation, see Henricks (2000).

2 For more details on this, see Lacertosa (2017).

comparative studies traditionally do; instead, the intention is to posit, each and every time, a theoretical and methodological framework that allows for the interpretation of the comparisons. In other words, the purpose of such a philosophy is not to find equivalences or differences, but to see how equivalences and differences can stimulate each other towards other meanings. Thus the configurations of comparisons become maps of philosophical processes and vice versa, in a constant exchange of positions. Moreover, conceiving comparisons in such a fashion means to have ethical stances towards oneself, the world, and others. That is to say, one can practice care of the self only through dialogues, by comparing oneself with the world and others. This is what I try to demonstrate in this chapter. In particular, I consider the concept of *dao* (or *tao*, 道) and its formulation in the first line of the *Daodejing*. First, I analyse some of the most common—and misleading—translations of this line into English. Then I compare the concepts of way-making and *be-wëgen* in, respectively, Ames/Hall and Heidegger. Finally, I propose a different approach to understanding *dao*.

Keywords: *Daodejing* (道德經), philosophy of comparison, Heidegger, *inventire*

Some preliminary remarks

How can *dao* (道) be translated? This is not a dull question. Quite the reverse: here lies one of the most difficult tasks in the study of Chinese philosophy.³ Different translations of this term describe different visions of the world.

In general, the most common English translation is ‘way’ and German translation is ‘Weg’. The first problem with English translations is the common capitalisation of the term ‘Way’—in German this problem is not so

3 This is not only a problem for Western scholars, but also concerns Chinese philosophers. Lai Chen expresses this position stating that “[u]nder the assaults of the introduction of Western thought, and with the sharp turn that resulted from the domination of the whole of writing by colloquial Chinese, all traditional discourse—which embodied the sense of Chinese philosophical questions in classical Chinese categories—dissolved almost completely. This has led to a philosophical “aphasia” in some areas. The language that twentieth-century Chinese philosophers employ is all translated from Western philosophical concepts. Thus, to express a classical Chinese philosophical concept in modern Chinese is itself tantamount to translation: More accurately, it is tantamount to translation into Western philosophical discourse. In this sense, it is not surprising that we Chinese scholars may sometimes find ourselves in the same predicament as our Western colleagues. Obviously, scholars from the East and the West have to face the same challenge of “translation” (Chen 1999: 11).

apparent because the language capitalises all nouns. This practice has an historical motivation. In fact, the *Daodejing* (道德經) has been interpreted for long time in a theological and metaphysical sense. As stated by Lin Ma:

One limitation of the early translators [...] is that they have heavily assimilated Asian ideas to Western religious conceptions. For instance, in their respective versions of the *Daodejing*, Richard Wilhelm translated *Dao* as *Sinn*, which insinuated the *logos* in The Gospel of Saint John; and Victor von Strauss directly rendered *Dao* as *Gott* (2016: 84).

Although the direct reference to God has been abandoned, the problem of the capitalisation of the noun remains. We need to remember that in Chinese nouns have neither capitalisation nor number nor gender. Consequently, *dao* can be translated as 'the Way', 'the way', 'the ways', and 'a way'. The problem does not change through use of the character's *pinyin* (Romanization), which is often rendered as 'the Dao'. To complicate things, we must consider that Chinese nouns can also have a verbal function depending on their position in the sentence.⁴ We can easily understand this if we analyse the first sentence of the *Daodejing* from the most common version of Wang Bi (王弼 226–249) (Lau 1989: 2): '*dao ke dao, fei chang dao*' (道可道, 非常道). Here, common interpretations consider the first *dao* as a noun; the second *dao* as a verb attached to the modal verb *ke* (可), which implies possibility (can, may, etc.); and the third *dao* as a noun again. The other two characters, *fei* (非) and *chang* (常), have the function of defining *dao*: *fei* negates the sentence, and *chang* means 'constant' or, more rarely, 'common' or 'everyday'. Let us consider some of the most common translations of this line.

'*Dao ke dao, fei chang dao*' (道可道, 非常道) in translation

It is not my intention here to delineate a historical, chronological or, even less, complete reconstruction of how the *Daodejing* has been translated into English. Instead, I use a few samples to underline the philosophical—or, in many cases, the onto-theo-logical—implications embedded in different translations.

4 'With respect to its etymology, *dao*, as a noun, originally meant "way leading in a direction"; as a verb, *dao* means "guiding to go," consisting of the dual meaning of "guidance" and "move." Obviously, "guidance" has certain direction. "Move" means "march" or "go forward"' (Chen 1999: 13).

Arthur Waley, in his ‘attempt to discover what the book meant when it was first written’, renders the first line thus: ‘The Way that can be told of is not an Unvarying Way’ (Waley 2005: 13). Here, not only is the concept of *dao* singularized and capitalized as ‘the Way’ but *fei chang* is also translated with the capitalization of ‘Unvarying’. These choices clearly point in a metaphysical direction. In fact, even if it were possible to accept the capitalisation of ‘Way’ as a conventional form for the discussion of abstract concepts, the decision to use a capital letter for interpreting and translating *fei chang* seems to be too arbitrary. It is clear that Waley considers *dao* to be a nominal concept defined by eternal and absolute attributes.

This vision resonates in many other translations, such as those by Yutang Lin and Wing-tsit Chan. Although both of them avoid the problem of translating *dao* (道) by using its Romanization, they remain totally inscribed in an onto-theo-logical mind-set. Lin’s version (1942) abandons any precautions and defines *dao* as ‘Absolute’ in what we can consider the climax of the metaphysical interpretations of the *Daodejing*.⁵ He translates the first line as: ‘The Tao that can be told of is not the Absolute Tao’. In *The Way of Lao Tzu* (1963b), Chan follows the same idea: ‘The Tao that can be told of is not the eternal Tao’.⁶ While it would be possible to multiply these examples almost *ad infinitum*, so to speak, we would not be able to get deeper via this line of thought. Yet, a couple of examples can be analysed to understand the verbal function of *dao*.

5 This choice is even more striking if we consider that Lin is against the metaphysical interpretation of early Chinese thought. He clearly writes in the same introduction to his translation: ‘For what is the Chinese philosophy, and does China have a philosophy, say, like that of Descartes or Kant, a logically built and cogently reasoned philosophy of knowledge or of reality or of the universe? The answer is proudly “No.” That is the whole point. So far as any systematic epistemology or metaphysics is concerned, China had to import it from India. The temperament for systematic philosophy simply wasn’t there, and will not be there so long as the Chinese remain Chinese’ (Lin 1942: XIV). For a critique of the metaphysical implication in the translation of *chang* as ‘Absolute’, see Liu (1999: 6).

6 Keping Wang justifies the translation of *chang* as ‘eternal’ by stating that in ‘the original text the expression *chang dao* (constant *Dao*) is changed to be *heng dao* [恆道] (eternal *Dao*) on the basis of the two copies of *The Book of Lao Zi* written on silk and unearthed in 1973 from an ancient tomb at Mawangdui 馬王堆, which dates back to the early Han Dynasty (c. 206 B.C.-180 B.C.) [...] However, both *chang* and *heng* mean the same in Chinese and they can therefore be translated into English as either “constant” or “eternal” (Wang 2010: 26). It seems to me that ‘constant’ and ‘eternal’ are very different concepts and not necessarily the one can be inscribed in the other. Moreover, as Coutinho specifies, *chang* ‘did not take on the sense of “eternal” until the introduction of Buddhist philosophy into China several centuries later, when it was adopted to express the concept of “permanence” (Coutinho 2014: 198).

These three translations consider the second *dao* as related to the verb 'to speak', 'to tell'. Thus, *ke dao* (可道) becomes 'can be told'. In his translation (1891), James Legge prefers to emphasize on the procedural aspect of *dao* by keeping the verbal meaning closer to the concept of 'way': 'The Tao that can be trodden is not the enduring and unchanging Tao'. Unfortunately, this laudable effort to conceive *dao* as an action, something that needs to be performed, is only speciously used to affirm its opposite, namely 'the' *dao*, the 'One' that is enduring and unchanging.⁷ Consequently, the verbal aspect of *dao* is dissolved in order to increase the nominal, normative, permanent interpretation of the character. It is the same in the even more cryptic and esoteric reading of Holmes Welch (1965: 55), who translates: 'The Tao that can be Tao'd is not the Absolute Tao'.⁸ In a line like this, nothing is said about *dao*. There is only a vague idea of something acted, something 'Dao'd', although it is not clear what this action means. Nevertheless, one thing becomes evident: once again, the verbal, procedural aspect of *dao* is presented, only to be negated by the idea of highest permanence. Moreover, in the absence of any other reference, the 'Absolute' almost becomes the subject of the sentence and, in any case, it represents its focal point.⁹

7 Chad Hansen clarifies that 'nothing in the Chinese corresponds to the definite article *the*. Translators conform to their own community practice of always putting *the* before *dao*. We could, in principle, take as interpretive hypotheses that the subject was a *dao* or any *dao*, or simply *Daos*. The translating convention embodies an ancient interpretive hypothesis that all Daoists must worship a mystical godlike *dao*. Thus they presume in translation what they cannot find in the original: assertion of the existence of a single, ineffable *dao*. It all seems so innocent. How can such a little, *nothing* word matter so much? The answer has been familiar to students of philosophy since Bertrand Russell. The usual effect of a definite article in English is to make a general noun, in this case the term *dao*, into a logically singular noun-phrase: *the* + general noun-phrase = a phrase that entails the existence of a unique object answering the description. Capitalization, on analogy with God (as against gods), has the same implication. It makes a general term a proper noun. Remember that previous thinkers have used *dao* as a general term of Chinese, not as a proper name' (Hansen 1992: 215).

8 In other parts of his book, Welch follows the version by Waley (Welch 1965: 7) and the one by Lin (Welch 1965: 51). It is worth noting that Welch uses Lin's translation to 'illustrate the ease of parallels between Christianity and Taoism' (Welch 1965: 16).

9 As with many missionaries before him, the only scope for Welch is to find God through the mystical experience described in the *Daodejing*. He himself defines the nature of his endeavour, stating that: '[w]e embarked on this discussion of miracles and magic to find out how Lao Tzu supported his claims to valid trance experience, how he knew that it was anything more than imagination' (Welch 1965: 79). And yet, after his quest, he controversially admits that it 'might be said that to the extent Tao is considered divine, the metaphysics becomes a theology and Taoism a religion. In that case it is a very curious religion. It is not based on faith, but on direct experience of God. It has no place for ritual or priests or church. It promises no response to

All of these examples give a taste of how their authors speak the language of metaphysics in translating the *Daodejing*. Still, are we entitled to use this language? Is the translation of *chang* as ‘Absolute’ a real option? Is there any other possibility outside onto-theo-logical language? A sign in this direction is offered by D.C. Lau, who proposes a more poised and soberer version (1989) of the Wang Bi text:

The way that can be spoken of
Is not the constant way.¹⁰

It is not difficult to see how Lau tries to convey a different interpretation based on an immanent understanding of *dao*: no longer capitalized, the ‘way’ drops any transcendent inclination and points to a more worldly meaning. This is mirrored by the choice of translating *chang* as ‘constant’, which keeps open the possibility of a way that can be acted in our everyday life, in opposition to the simpler and more restrictive way that is spoken and defined by language.

It is not by chance that Lau’s study is also at the heart of the Roger Ames and David Hall version, as they themselves openly declare (Ames and Hall 2003: 76). Their ‘philosophical translation’ of the *Daodejing* offers many opportunities for reflection, and for this reason it is the focus for the rest of my analysis.

Dao (道) as ‘way-making’

As we have seen, Chinese nouns can have a verbal function depending on their position in the sentence. Ames and Hall solve the problem of the nominal and verbal function of *dao* by using the concept of ‘way-making’. Their translation of the first line goes: ‘Way-making that can be put into

prayer while we are in this world, and as to the next world, that does not exist—unless it be the state of non-being, which does not sound particularly lively. It vigorously attacks morality and government, two institutions that religion generally supports. And most curious of all, the mystical experience it offers is not ecstatic, but dark, neutral, and uncertain. For these reasons Taoism as a religion was no success at all. Or rather the highly successful religion which came to be called Taoism has almost nothing to do with the *Tao Te Ching*’ (Welch 1965: 87). Whilst many of these observations are questionable, it seems to me difficult to disagree with the last statement.

¹⁰ Angus Graham considers the ‘scrupulously scholarly version by D.C. Lau’ close ‘not only to the sense of the original but to its skeletal poetry’ (2003: 136).

words is not really way-making'.¹¹ The two authors describe their motivation behind this choice thus:

Taking the verbal *dao* as primary, its several derived meanings emerge rather naturally: 'to lead through,' and hence: 'road, path, way, method, to put into words, to explain, teachings, doctrines, art.' At its most fundamental level, *dao* seems to denote the active project of 'moving ahead in the world,' of 'forging a way forward,' of 'road building.' Hence, our neologism: 'way-making.' By extension, *dao* comes to connote a pathway that has been made, and hence can be traveled. (Ames and Hall 2003: 57)

This interpretation of *dao* as 'primarily gerundive, processional, and dynamic: "a leading forth"' (Ames and Hall 2003: 57) has interesting consequences, including overturning the common metaphysical approach. This translation precisely opposes the absolutization of *dao* that is imposed by transcendent perspectives, which implies that as soon as we define *dao* we stop experiencing and acting it. In other words, the determination of one single way as absolute misses the procedural aspect that the verbal meaning of the character entails. Against this essentialisation, Ames and Hall also coherently eliminate capitalisations. Moreover, 'way-making' is not determined by any article: there is no 'the' for way-making, which therefore suggests not only a constant action, but also a plurality of possibilities. The translation of *dao* as way-making therefore has the great advantage of getting rid of the prevailing metaphysical interpretations.¹² And yet, we

11 The reference text for the translation by Ames and Hall is not Wang Bi but the Mawangdui version, which reads: 道，可道也，非恆道也。 For a detailed analysis of the Mawangdui *Laozi*, see Henricks (1989). In this context, only one remark is necessary: the Mawangdui texts 'do not differ in any *radical* way from later version of the text' (Henricks 1989: XV italics in original) and there is nothing in these texts 'that would lead us to understand the philosophy of the text in a radical new way' (Henricks 1989: XV). Philip Ivanhoe shares the same opinion (2001: XVI). For a comparison and an appraisal of the different versions of the *Daodejing*, see Liu (2006).

12 In fact, it is increasingly acknowledged that the worldview of ancient China was not based on metaphysical categories. Graham, for instance, states that '[i]n Indo-European languages a thing simply *is*, without implying anything outside it, and it is the most abstract entities which the Platonic tradition most willingly credits with being. In Chinese, on the other hand, one approaches the thing from outside, from the world which "has" it, in which "there is" it. From this point of view, the more concrete a thing is, the more plainly the world has it; for example, one can emphasize the absolute non-existence of X by saying 天下無 [*tian xia wu*] X "The world does not have X" (more literally, "There is no X under the sky"). In this respect, as in the absence of the copulative functions of "to be", *yu* [有] is like "exist", which also implies a concrete thing with a background from which it stands out (*existit*). But there remains the difference that "exists", like "is", is attached to a subject and not to an object' (Graham 1990: 343). This very difference

cannot adopt this translation without some serious precautions. We have two reasons to be cautious: first, it is impossible not to consider the affinity of ‘way-making’ with Nelson Goodman’s concept of ‘worldmaking’,¹³ and second, the term ‘way-making’ has a direct connection with Heidegger’s *be-wägen*. These concepts refer to different perspectives that need to be briefly analysed. Let us consider the notion of ‘worldmaking’ first.

In *Ways of Worldmaking*, Nelson Goodman faces the question of ‘how worlds are made, tested, and known’ (1978: 7). In trying to escape from an essentialist perspective, Goodman proposes a theory that envisages a plurality of worlds fabricated by human beings.¹⁴ If we consider the concept of ‘way-making’ as ‘forging a way forward’ or ‘road building’, the affinity between ‘worldmaking’ and ‘way-making’ becomes evident. These two concepts both emphasize the procedural aspect of the human relationship with the world, overcoming in this way its essentialist and nominalist interpretation. The problem is that, in doing so, they seem to put the entire weight on the human being, reducing the world to a simple object that is ready-at-hand. This is not far from the modern Western understanding of the subject as *subiectum*, which in turn is the grounding substance (*sub-stare*, ‘to stand under’) that objectifies the world. In fact, although Goodman is against this objectification as the ‘One’ reality and is in favour of a plurality of productions, he nevertheless considers humanity the *subject* in this process. Therefore, the concepts of both ‘worldmaking’ and ‘way-making’ are too close to the modern assumption of the *creative mind*. This idea clashes with the concept of *dao*, which is not simply a production of humans. If we

makes the translation of Chinese thought with metaphysical concepts extremely problematic. In fact, in ‘Chinese one approaches existence from something outside, usually undefined, which has, in which there is, the thing in question [...] Western philosophy, grounded in Greek and Latin rather than in ordinary modern speech, has generally approached the question from the opposite direction, from the thing which “is” or “exists”. The object of *yu* is the subject of “is”’ (Graham 1990: 328). This does not mean that early Chinese thought could not conceive of any metaphysical perspective. It only means that metaphysics was not the main focus of classical Chinese language and thought. As clearly asserted by Ames, ‘[o]ne cannot state the Ontological Argument in Chinese because the language lacks the construction involving the verb “to be” in asserting existence. Still one can use Chinese as a metalanguage in explaining how the Ontological Argument is something that can be stated in an Indo-European Language’ (Ames 1991: XII).

13 Ames asserts that *dao* references the human sojourn through the life experience and might alternatively be translated as “world-making” with the understanding that the etymology of the term “world” is literally “the age of man” (Ames 2015b: 264).

14 In *Languages of Art*, Goodman openly states: ‘My aim has been to take some steps toward a systematic study of symbols and symbol systems and the ways they function in our perceptions and actions and arts and sciences, and thus in the creation and comprehension of our worlds’ (1976: 265).

consider what is said in the *Xici* (繫辭)—also called *Dazhuan* (大傳), the *Great Commentary* of the *Yijing* (易經): 'yi yin yi yang zhi wei dao' (一陰一陽之謂道) (A5.1) 'The reciprocal process of yin and yang is called the Dao' (Lynn 1994a: 53),¹⁵ we can easily assume that, although *dao* is a process, it does not pertain exclusively to human beings.¹⁶ This means that *dao* as 'way-making'—and, by extension, as 'worldmaking'—is not simply produced by a grounding *subiectum*, but is also a process stemming from and depending on the relationships between different aspects of the world, in which humankind is only *one* of manifold components.

In a recent article, Ames, drawing from Tang Junyi, expresses more attentively this aspect of the classical Chinese thought:

Tang Junyi suggests that in Chinese natural cosmology, there is 'no appeal to a fixed substratum (*wudingtiguān* 無定體觀).' Of course this proposition is a rejection of the relevance of ontological disparity – the familiar reality and appearance distinction – in the Chinese cosmological sensibility [...] This commitment to an inherent, emergent sense of order rather than assumptions about an underlying permanent order might be

15 Guying Chen states that this thought has its origin precisely in the *Daodejing* (Chen 2008: 46). In the translation by Graham we read 'The alternation of Yin and Yang is what is meant by the "Way"' (1990: 58). Chan Wing-tsit translates 'The successive movement of *yin* and *yang* constitutes the Way' (Chan 1963a: 266). The version by Cheng Chung-ying reads 'It is the exchange of one yin and one yang which is called the Way' (Cheng 1991: 363). Cary F. Baynes, in his translation from Richard Wilhelm—'Was einmal das Dunkle und einmal das Lichte hervortreten läßt, das ist der SINN' (Wilhelm 1924: 225)—renders: 'That which lets now the dark, now the light appear is tao' (Wilhelm and Baynes 1967: 587). Wilhelm, and consequently Baynes, consider *yin* (陰) to be *Dunkle* ('dark') and *yang* (陽) to be *Lichte* ('light')—for a critique of the Wilhelm/Baynes translation, see Ho (1991). These are possible meanings for the two characters, which in general function as complementary: night and day, moon and sun, female and male, etc. Cheng states, 'The so-called *yinyang* represents two moments or two aspects of the process of transformation or change, which are to be understood in an extensive context of contrastive and correlative understandings of qualities and movements of things and their relationships – qualities and movements such as feminine and masculine, dark and bright, closed and open, coming and going. To generalize over these qualities and movements we reach the *yinyang* polarity of transformation that could be said to be both the moving process and the resulting phase of transformation in things' (Cheng 1991: 363). Unfortunately, it is not possible within the scope of this chapter to further develop the concepts of *yin* and *yang*, or the complexity of the *Yijing*. For further analysis, see Lynn (1994b) and Ames (2015a).

16 For an extensive interpretation of the *Daodejing* as an exposition of process, see Barbalet's assertion that the 'significance given to action in *Daodejing* means that the understanding of process never lapses into metaphysical or mystical reflection. The significance given to process means that the understanding of action never lapses into voluntarism or methodological individualism' (Barbalet 2014: 21).

restated positively as the perceived interdependence of ‘reforming and functioning (*tìyong* [体用])’ or alternatively, as the primacy of process and change over form and stasis. This contrast between a substance and a process sensibility can be captured in the difference between ‘metaphysics’ as the discovery of unchanging first principles on the one hand, and on the other, ‘the mapping out and forging a way forward in the world (*dao* 道)’ ubiquitous in the Chinese philosophical texts. In this Chinese cosmology, order is not superordinate, standing independent of the world that it orders. Rather, the coherence of our experience emerges within the transformations occurring in the world around us (Ames 2015a: 8).

We can conclude that humankind, as part of the world, participates in its order and disorder without being an autonomous *subiectum*. I come back to this in more detail soon. For now, it is necessary to balance the concept of ‘worldmaking’ and its subjective humanism. To do so, it is useful to turn to Heidegger and his idea of *dao*.

Dao (道) as ‘*be-wëgen*’

It is true that Heidegger refers to *dao* as ‘*Weg*’ (‘way’). However, his interpretation of the Chinese character lies in the concept of ‘*be-wëgen*’. In ‘The nature of Language’ (1971) he expressly states that

The key word in Laotse’s poetic thinking is *Tao*, which ‘properly speaking’ means way. But because we are prone to think of ‘way’ superficially, as a stretch connecting two places, our word ‘way’ has all too rashly been considered unfit to name what *Tao* says. *Tao* is then translated as reason, mind, *raison*, meaning, *logos* (Heidegger 1971: 92).

Heidegger therefore considers *dao* not as a mere ‘way’, but rather as what

gives way, moves us. We hear the words ‘give way’ in this sense: to be the original giver and founder of ways (Heidegger 1971: 92).

Sie be-wëgt. Wir hören das Wort Be-wëgung im Sinne von: Wege allererst ergeben und stiften (Heidegger 1985: 186).

For Heidegger, *dao* is the origin and founder of ways insofar as it *be-wëgt*, as it gives way. Immediately afterwards, Heidegger mentions that, in the

Alemannic-Swabian dialect, the etymology of *be-wĕgen* and *Be-wĕgung* is the verb *wĕgen*, which means 'to clear a way', for instance across a snow-covered field. Heidegger clarifies that

This verb, used transitively, means: to form a way and, forming it, to keep it ready. Way-making [*Be-wĕgen*] understood in this sense no longer means to move something up or down a path that is already there. It means to bring the way [...] forth first of all, and thus to *be* the way (Heidegger 1971: 130).

Dieses transitiv gebrauchte Zeitwort besagt: einen Weg bilden, bildend ihn bereit halten. Be-wĕgen (Be-wĕgung) heißt, so gedacht, nicht mehr: etwas nur auf einem schon vorhandenen Weg hin- und herschaffen, sondern: den Weg zu [...] allererst erbringen und so der Weg 'sein' (Heidegger 1985: 249).

It is interesting that Peter Hertz translates *be-wĕgen* as 'way-making'. Ames and Hall do not refer to Heidegger anywhere in their translation, but it is unlikely that they were unaware of this important Heideggerian passage. Be that as it may, we need to consider an important aspect of this verb.

Gail Stenstad—one of the few scholars who acknowledges the importance of the concept of *be-wĕgen* in Heidegger's philosophy—analyses the term, stating that it is not

a standard German word; it is not just 'movement' (*Bewegung*). The unusual hyphen and umlaut tell us to be attentive for something different, something more [...] There is no way already *there* somewhere just waiting to be discovered and followed. Way-making movement gives and makes ways *in* way making. The way becomes way only as it opens and is thought or followed, in the same moving, at the same time. The hyphen in *Be-wĕgung* and *be-wĕgen* puts special emphasis on the prefix, which often turns transitive verbs into intransitive verbs. By emphasizing the prefix Heidegger may be suggesting that we are not to understand *be-wĕgen* as a transitive verb in some typical subject-object structure. Way is not some object. Way-making makes way in such a way that 'it is' the way, that is, all there 'is' is way-making movement. The movement moves, and that is all. It gives way in self-withdrawing, in yielding way. Such giving way clears the way for saying, for the self-showing of whatever is freed into the clearing or opening of the way (Stenstad 2006: 80-81).

I completely agree with Stenstad's analysis. However, there is a problem that needs to be addressed. If there is no 'way' already *there* somewhere, just waiting

to be discovered and followed; if *be-wëgen* is a verb without a subject-object structure, thereby denying any subjective grounding; and if all there 'is' is way-making movement, the question becomes: who or what is responsible for this movement, who or what *gives* way? Stenstad suggests that *be-wëgen* 'gives way in self-withdrawing'. Still, if we equate *be-wëgen* with self-withdrawing, we equate it with the ontological difference and, therefore, with *Sein* ('being'). And yet Stenstad seems to be right: this is the direction in which Heidegger is pointing. It is not by chance that Heidegger emphasises the word '*sein*' at the end of the aforementioned passage. Here lies an important aspect of Heideggerian philosophy that, unfortunately, goes beyond the remit of this paper, and which I can only briefly mention in this context.

In his attempt to reduce the subjectivist interpretation of *Dasein* (literally, 'being there'), Heidegger conceives being as *es gibt* ('there is', literally 'it gives'). In 'Letter on "Humanism"', he openly asserts that we can grasp the ontological difference only if we comprehend that '*es gibt das Sein*' ('there is / it gives being'), provided that 'the "it" that here "gives" is being itself' (Heidegger 1998: 254-255) ('*das "es", was hier "gibt", ist das Sein selbst*' (Heidegger 1976: 334)). In trying to escape the metaphysical danger of the rational mind that grounds itself and reduces the world to an object present-at-hand, Heidegger falls into the trap of another metaphysical assumption. As Robert Neville holds:

Heidegger's metaphysics of substance, repeated despite his best efforts in the notion of *Dasein*, frustrated his approach to the ontological question. While attractive to some and the source of his early influence (even among Buddhists), Heidegger's existential individualism was a direct impediment to his philosophical intentions as expressed in his phrase, 'being in the world.' He abandoned that impediment in his later writings (Neville 1991: 144).

This becomes even more evident in relation to *dao* when Heidegger affirms that 'Tao could be the way that gives all ways' (Heidegger 1971: 92) ('*könnte der Tao der alles be-wëgende Weg sein*' (Heidegger 1985: 187)). Katrin Froese interprets the passage as 'the Dao may be the all-moving way' (2006: 46), which gives to the sentence an even more marked nuance of *primum movens* ("prime mover"). We are then back to square one: *dao* is equated with *Sein*.¹⁷ I believe that this vision of *dao* as a self-withdrawing being is as misleading as the concept of worldmaking.

17 Chung-Ying Cheng also affirms that 'Heidegger himself tried to understand the *tao* in terms of Being or vice versa in his later years' (Cheng 1991: 368).

Conclusions

As a consequence of this analysis, we can conclude that if we want to consider *dao* as either 'way-making' or *be-wĕgen*, we need to search for a compromise between the subjective creation of 'worldmaking' and the impersonal self-withdrawing of *es gibt*. It is well known that the conception of the world in ancient China was based on a balanced harmony of all of its components, including humankind. In this view, we are not just in-the-world, but instead *part* of the world, arising *with* it. Warren Frisina observes that

The sage can form one body with all things because his own existence is also a pattern of *yin/yang* alternations. The boundaries that divide the world into discrete entities are overcome by the sage who recognizes his continuity with all things and adjusts his own *yin/yang* patterns in ways that maximize their potential for harmonic integration. These patterns, therefore, are not preexisting or permanent. They are created within concrete situations (2002: 82).

Although it can be difficult for a mindset trained in the tradition of Descartes, Locke, Kant, and so on, to conceive such a perspective,¹⁸ I believe there is a space in one's own vision of the world that opens this possibility. I propose to consider a passage from Paul Ricœur's *The Rule of Metaphor* in order to properly illuminate this position. In trying to answer the question 'do we know what is meant by world, truth, reality?' (Ricœur 1978: 305), Ricœur asserts that

We must [...] dismantle the reign of objects in order to let be, and to allow to be uttered, our primordial belonging to a world which we inhabit, that is to say, which at once precedes us and receives the imprint of our works. In short, we must restore to the fine word *invent* its twofold sense of both discovery and creation (Ricœur 1978: 306, italics in original).

'Invent', from Latin *invēntus*, the past participle of *invenire*, means 'to find', 'to discover while searching', but also 'to arrive somewhere'. In fact, *invenire*

18 Jacques Gernet points to this historical difficulty when he asserts: 'Believing that the universe possesses within itself its own organisational principles and its own creative energy, the Chinese maintained something that was quite scandalous from the point of view of scholastic reason, namely that "matter" itself is intelligent—not, clearly enough, with a conscious and reflective intelligence as we usually conceive it, but with a spontaneous intelligence which makes it possible for the *yin* and the *yang* to come together and guides the infinite combinations of these two opposite sources of energy' (Gernet 1985: 204).

is composed of *in* and *venire*, literally ‘to come in (a place)’. Ricœur’s words help clarify that, in dealing with the world, one is constantly mutually entailing with it: the world always precedes and conditions humans, and at the same time humans discover and make sense of the world in many different ways.

If we regard the concepts of ‘way-making’ and *be-wëgen* not as creation or *Sein* but as invention, we reintroduce the relational aspect of the term, by which it is implied that we neither create a world *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) nor are we totally determined by it. Quite the reverse: we walk in the middle of these two extremes; we discover a place by making space for it in our conceptions. *Dao* as ‘way-making’/*be-wëgen* ought to be conceived as this discovering process. However, what is discovered is not an objective place but something in constant transformation, which constantly needs to be reshaped and simultaneously reshapes us. We find a space in the world by making a space for this process as part of the world, which in turn opens and limits this space with and within us. Therefore, *dao* is not something inside or outside humankind; it can neither be created nor be given. *Dao* is closer to becoming than any foundational substance, *subiectum*, or *Sein* and humankind participates in it as any other part of the world.¹⁹

If we embrace this perspective, we can better understand the joke of Ames and Hall when they assert:

As a parody on Parmenides, who claimed that ‘only Being is,’ we might say that for the Daoist, ‘only *beings* are,’ or taking one step further in underscoring the reality of the process of change itself, ‘only *becomings* are’ (Ames and Hall 2003: 14).

I am not sure that ‘only *beings* are’, and I am not convinced that any ‘only’ can define what should exist. But this is a parody and ought to be considered as such. Sure enough, it does not mean that everything goes—on the contrary,

19 Wei-Ming Tu reminds us something similar when he declares that in classical Chinese thought the ‘motif of wholeness is directly derived from the idea of continuity as all-encompassing. If the world were created by an intelligence higher than and external to the great transformation, it would, by definition, fall short of a manifestation of holism [...] Traditional Chinese thinkers, of course, did not philosophize in those terms. They used different conceptual apparatuses to convey their thought. To them, the appropriate metaphor for understanding the universe was biology rather than physics. At issue was not the eternal, static structure but the dynamic process of growth and transformation. To say that the cosmos is a continuum and that all of its components are internally connected is also to say that it is an organismic unity, holistically integrated at each level of complexity’ (Tu 1985: 38-39).

conceiving a world of becoming implies that it itself needs to be acted while it simultaneously affects us, constantly. The process metaphor of *dao* needs such a relation. This suggests that we participate in this process with the world and the others, but also through them. In this sense, care of the self can only be practiced through care of the world and of others. In fact, we *are* the world and we are *others*. No imposition or restriction ought to be allowed to 'the others', as the price would be an imposition on ourselves. The second line of the *Daodejing* affirms: 'a name that can be named is not constant naming' (*ming ke ming, fei chang ming* 名可名, 非常名). And yet only through names can we participate in this process. We just need to see this naming as constantly *in-venire*, which implies a mutually entailing relation between the self and the other. The result is a reciprocal transformation that *calls* the others while it replies to their summons. *Dao*, therefore, is not a normative principle that can be defined and followed, because this would not be the constant process of *dao*. If one accepts this interpretation of the first line of the *Daodejing*, it becomes evident that, more than any substance or entity, *dao* indicates the possibility of always *inventing* anew the relations between the self, the other, and the world at large—thus opening a space for a comprehensive dialogue that goes beyond the anthropocentric perspective without transcending to metaphysical hypostases.

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6. Constructing Each Other

Contemporary Travel of Urban-Design Ideas between China and the West

Katharina M. Borgmann and Deirdre Sneep

Abstract

The city is a facilitator for the construction of stories, images, and ideas of the Other with the purpose of using these concepts to strengthen ideas about the Self. This chapter takes a closer look at the construction of images of the Self and the Other in the West (here used to refer to Western Europe) and China through the exchange of ideas about urban design and urban living. Historically, ideas and concepts about urban planning and architectural design have always influenced cities across different cultures. When urban aesthetics generated by the Other infiltrate a city that is familiar to the 'Self', what happens to 'Self'-identity? We examine the practice of importing traditional European urban aesthetics to Shanghai and the practice of *feng shui* (风水, 'geomancy') in urban living in the West, and discover that a central theme in the travel of both of these ideas is their strong counter-Western narrative. *Feng shui* in the West stimulates a rejection of Western thinking about urban space and ideas about humans and their environment, instead advocating principles based on traditional Chinese philosophies. Shanghai, on the other hand, is not so much rejecting European ways of living in a city (indeed, it advocates a form based on borrowing from European characteristics), but rather renouncing European power and establishing Shanghai—or China as *pars pro toto*—as a prominent player on the world stage. In this chapter, we hope to contribute to a better understanding of how imageries of the West and of China reflect and shape the relationships between the two.

Keywords: travel of ideas, spatial concepts, environmental design, Orientalism, China

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Introduction

Since the fall of the communist regime in China, the relationship between Western Europe (in this chapter referred to as ‘the West’) and China has changed drastically. In the past few decades, China has emerged as a primary economic force in the global market, quickly reconquering the position it had in past millennia as one of the world’s most prominent trading nations. The relation between China and the rest of the world has always been characterized in terms of a certain fear of its power—which is why it is often referred to as a ‘dragon’ or ‘tiger’ and given aggressive adjectives such as ‘booming’ or ‘rising’. It is clear that the sudden changes that China has undergone in the past few decades have not just forced Chinese society to re-imagine itself, but have also had a large impact on the way Western countries perceive China. The drastic alterations to China’s own image, exerted through economic, political, and cultural changes, have rattled the image of ‘the Other’ so much that the West has needed to re-construct its understanding of China’s identity, resulting in a two-way identity crisis.

In this paper, we analyse some of the ideas that play a role in the current construction of the Self and the Other in the relationship between China and Western Europe by looking at their manifestations in the built environment. To trace the evolution and transformation of certain ideas is extremely difficult—but when ideas take on physical forms the process becomes more visible and palpable. We know that man-made space is an expression of society and a reflection of its dominant ideologies (Lefebvre 2000 [1974]). With the right tools, urban codes can be read, similar to any other medium. The exchange of ideas between China and various countries in Western Europe has had a substantial impact on the urban environment on both fronts and shows the nature of the relationship between the two. Historically, architects have implemented ideas from various places and cultures to impress, improve, or raise the value of their work—and China is no exception to this. This is even truer for the societies in which we live today, an era of constant urbanization characterized by the mass-production of urban space (especially in the case of China). In this urban era defined by the flow of information and the production of knowledge, the built environment is also increasingly reflecting the travel of ideas between cultures and countries in line with globalist forces. Identifying and analysing the recent ideas and influences that China has had on Western European building concepts and the influences of Western European spatial approaches on the Chinese environment provides important new insights into the construction of ‘the Self’ and ‘the Other’.

China and the West—the Self and the Other

Past experience shows that the travel of ideas between countries is in most cases not something that stems from or creates equality. For a long time, the ideas and principles that were developed and refined by Western Europe were imposed upon various other regions in often-aggressive ways and with the goal of establishing dominance. Of course, there is a certain amount of leeway in this process, and we should not see the receiving end of such ideological traffic as a passive subject (Hein 2008; 2017). Ideas are adapted and played with, as is the case with the many ideas that travelled between China and Western Europe. When considering ideas that travel between the 'East' and 'West', we have to take how the image and perception of the Other has affected the influx of ideas into account. As Edward Said argued in *Orientalism* (1979), the West has systematically portrayed the East in ways that establish an unequal relation between the two, and in which the West always prevails over the Other (the East). To define the Self, we have to define the Other—for without contrast we cannot construct our own identity. This Lacanian idea is the foundation of Said's concept of Orientalism. In addition to the most prominent narrative—that the East is less rational and developed—gender also plays a big role, as the East is often portrayed as feminine, childish, and submissive. Although it can be said that Said himself was part of his own argument that the West generalizes the East—i.e., he himself failed to distinguish between the many different regions in Asia—his theory of Orientalism continues to help us understand the dynamics that lie behind the travel of ideas between the 'West' and the 'East'. Since its publication in 1978, the concept has been developed further to solve some of the issues that Said could not address. There have been many studies that apply the concept to the interaction between China and the 'West' (Leong 2005; Chan 2009; Vukovich 2012; Yang 2012), especially with relation to the exchange of philosophies, as both sides have a substantial history of fostering strong philosophical schools (see Bracken, this volume).

Although definitions of the Other are deeply rooted in European history, the actual ways in which ideas about the Other manifest have changed over the course of history. In his work on China and Orientalism, Daniel Vukovich (2012) has described how, after the fall of the Maoist regime, the dominant vision of China in the West changed from the classical view of China as place of exotic mysticism mixed with the image of the tyrannical despot to a narrative of a developing country aspiring to become the same as the (superior) West. The post-Mao, post-Cold War image of China in the West is characterized by 'a sameness structured by a hierarchical difference'

(Vukovich 2012: 3). This shows an underlying determinist theory in which all countries are bound to develop in a similar way, with the West in the lead of this universal progress. When it comes to the discussion of Chinese cities, there is a growing body of literature that deals with the Chinese city as polluted. Although pollution is indeed a growing problem in China's cities, this narrative echoes the older one of 'the Asian city' as disorderly, chaotic, and unsanitary or polluted, which was previously projected particularly onto Indian cities (Angotti (2013) also examined in Li, this volume). By comparing the Chinese city to its European, 'clean' counterparts, Chinese cities are placed lower on a hierarchical ranking system that is informed by a universalist discourse, in which the ultimate goal is to become as developed, neat, and pristine as the European model. In this discourse, China is unable to ever reach or surpass this level, because, as Shih Shumei¹ has also argued (2001), China can never fulfil all of the requirements for the Westernization that is an essential part of this process of becoming 'modern'. In a sense, it can only surpass the West retroactively, by remembering China as one of the cradles of civilization and reminiscing about its great past accomplishments, as symbolized by another physical structure, the Great Wall—which is thought of with such awe that it is often falsely believed to be visible from outer space.

The Great Wall of China was heralded by the Jesuits as a symbol of China's former glory (Dirlik 2002; Yan and Santos 2009) and, because it portrayed China as a cradle of mankind's civilization, the Wall has sometimes even been deprived of its Chineseness, so as to make it into an accomplishment of *all of humanity* rather than of China. Over time, the remnants of the wall have played an important role not only in the construction of China's image in the West, but also as a national symbol and in the construction of China's national identity (Dirlik 2002). Independent of how impressive they are in size and design, China's current modern buildings and structures are often seen as only irrational duplicates of Western buildings that are void of meaning or character. With China's urbanization and re-urbanization processes advancing rapidly, there are plenty of examples of Western-looking, experimental buildings that are belittled or ridiculed overseas (Bosker 2013).² In a similar way, modern Chinese buildings that attempt to reflect a

1 In this paper, Chinese names are given family names first, as is common in China.

2 Example: China's Hebei University of Fine Arts, which has a remarkable design. The University was the result of an art project that played with architecture based on Europe's old castles. Netizens instead accused the architects of modelling the University after the Harry Potter movies.

part of Chinese culture by sporting ‘typically’ Chinese decorative elements such as upturned roofs, colours, and window grills, or that have the colours red or yellow in them, are seen as aesthetically challenging and a riddle that needs better understanding (Hassenpflug 2010).

China also has a constructed image of the West that helps shape its own identity. Occidentalism (the counterpart of Orientalism) in China has been heavily influenced by its colonial past. Although China was only ever partially colonized and was never completely governed by Western countries, many cities carry a history that is overshadowed by the memory of various colonial conflicts. As Chen Xiaomei (2002) explains in her work on Occidentalism, the West has often been portrayed as a cruel oppressor. In socialist time this carefully constructed image was actually used by the ruling party—not to establish superiority over the West, interestingly enough, but over the other political parties. In her extended work, Chen also argues that the West and its Oriental narratives have been met with and countered by a variety of narratives produced in China that play with the dominant, Orientalist narratives. One of the most interesting parts of state-produced Occidentalism in China is how the Communist Party reproduced a narrative of China as ‘rural’ and the West as ‘the city’ (Buruma and Margalit 2005; Chen 2002). This showed a deep emotional attachment to the ‘rural’ as a symbol of being earnest and hard-working and having a strong sense of community, while the West, portrayed as the cosmopolitan ‘city’, was considered (morally) corrupt and decadent (Chen 2002: 4). The same capitalist city that Mao and his followers tried to fight is now flourishing as a site of individual and collective identity in China (Visser 2010).

Transnational cities

We can see how in both Western narratives about China and China’s narratives about the West the built environment has always played an important role as a symbol for the ideas about the Other. The physical environment is a facilitator for constructing stories, images, and ideas of the Other with the purpose of using these concepts to strengthen ideas about the Self. But this practice does not stop at looking at the Other through the built environment. The West and China are not two separate entities; ideas about architecture, urban design, and planning have been travelling from one end of the world to the other for centuries (Sanyal 2005; Hein 2017). This is not just true for countries that are geographically close to each other; Carola Hein, for example, gives examples of exchange between Japan and Europe.

Although the European side has had a stronger influence over Japan than the other way around, exchanges in architecture and urban planning are visible. In the past century, this interaction has intensified and sped up so much that there are already cities that are being dubbed 'transnational' or 'cross-cultural' (Krätke et al. 2012), of which Singapore, Dubai, or Shanghai are good examples.

Of course, not every idea can spread with the same success or over the same distance. According to David Held et al., the processes of globalization allow ideas to travel depending on: 1) the extensity of global networks; 2) the intensity of global interconnectedness; 3) the velocity of global flows; and 4) the impact propensity³ of global interconnectedness (1999: 17). All of these conditions are directly linked to the relationships between the two sides. In both the West and China, there are some very strong lines of philosophies and ideas that influence and are expressed through building and planning design. Each of these has a profound history and strong cultural ties, which may lead to the assumption that it would be difficult for other forms of spatial concepts, architectural styles, or planning practices to be implemented. Nevertheless, the examples that we discuss in the following section of this chapter have travelled cultural borders and taken root in the Other city—in both the Western European and the Chinese case. The 'Self' is largely constructed on the very idea that it is in contrast to the Other—so when the familiar city becomes 'contaminated' with building ideas that carry unfamiliar philosophies, what happens to the image of the Self?

As has been pointed out before, the travel of ideas is hardly an open market and ideas travel at different speeds. Western ideas rooted in religion, for example, permeated along trading routes such as the Silk Route (Ch'en 2015: 5) or were imposed upon other cultures through networks of colonialism and oppression. Many of these ideas were aggressively forced on other cultures and have lasting effects today. Indeed, Western knowledge production and re-production has had—and still has—an iron grip on many parts of the world. On the other hand, since ancient times China has been a powerful player in world politics and economics. Unlike many other countries that are influenced by Western thought, China has itself produced a strong knowledge market and has had a tremendous impact on its neighbouring countries. We cannot see the relationship between China and the West as simply that of the oppressor and the oppressed, as in many of the examples Said uses in his argument about Orientalism. In the context of Chinese versus Western knowledge production, we have to acknowledge China's own large

3 That is, a characteristic direction or 'behaviour' of such an impact.

historical role as a producer of culture and philosophy. The importance of China in the global market (both economic and cultural) has always been recognized by the West and met with respectful fear, as expressed as well in the image of the Asian ‘despot’ (although this image was not just applied to China, but also to sovereigns of other Asian countries). In addition, the fear that China would ‘take over’ Europe in economic or military terms has been around since the Middle Ages, which has further built up a resistance against influences from the East.

Travelling concepts

Let us now proceed to take a look at two recent examples of Western architectural knowledge production in China and of the presence of Chinese environmental philosophy in the West. In a rapidly developing economy like that of China, cities play a crucial role as spaces of production and consumption (Wu and Gaubatz 2013). China’s large and growing cities have been pointed out as one of the driving forces behind its economic growth (Bracken 2012: 14; Campanella 2008: 19). The population classified as ‘urban’ in China has doubled since 2000. This number is partly explainable through changes in the policy definition of what is ‘urban’ and the acquiring of village agglomerations under city governments. Nevertheless, since the end of the Mao era, China has undertaken a process of urbanization that is said to be of unprecedented scale—the biggest in history, according to some writers (Seto 2013). China contains several so-called ‘megacities’ that are among the largest urban agglomerations in the world. The fast-paced urbanization process, in which entire satellite cities and large new urban districts are constructed in short time-frames, is an excellent backdrop for examining how ideas about urban planning and architectural aesthetics are imported from elsewhere, then de-constructed and re-constructed in the Chinese environment. On the other hand, specific ideas about urban planning and urban design that have Chinese roots can also be seen in the urban environment in the West, most visibly *feng shui* (风水). In the following section, we give an overview of how these concepts travelled from one side of the world to the other, how they were deconstructed and contextualized by local factors, and how they ended up being consumed by the users.

European principles in a Chinese context

One of the most interesting cases of the import of European urban concepts into China is seen in the 'One-City-Nine-Towns' plan surrounding Shanghai, which is China's largest city and one of East Asia's largest urban agglomerations. (This plan will also be examined in Volume II of *City and Society: The Care of the Self*, in a chapter entitled 'The Western World as Utopia? Thames Town, Songjiang, and the New Chinese Residential Habits' by Martin Minost). The 'One-City-Nine-Towns' plan was conceptualized in 2001 and completed in the years afterward. Six out of the nine towns were built to represent (simplified and stereotypical versions of) traditional Western cityscapes from Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Spain, and Scandinavia. An earlier plan included a North American town as well, but that was cancelled. Each of the towns, which were designed as suburban residential areas for members of the Chinese upper middle class, is designed based on historical towns in the West and constructed with the help of European architectural offices. The designs for the British town, for example:

deliberately encompass buildings of Tudor, Victorian, and Georgian styles, with a neo-Gothic church surrounded by lawns, a fake turreted castle by an artificial lake, and a dock plaza with red-brick warehouses on the waterfront—and also feature bronze statues of Winston Churchill, Florence Nightingale, William Shakespeare, and Princess Diana. Typically British institutions have been cloned as well, with an English pub selling real ale, a Fish & Chips shop, a Costa Café, an open market with echoes of Covent Garden, and a boutique that even offers European-style wedding services. The orchestrated and controlled landscapes as well as the simulated and unreal experiences are reminiscent of Disney World. Not surprisingly, most new suburban development in China today is heavily packaged and promoted to suggest an ideal living environment (Shen and Wu 2012: 195–196).

Not only were these towns designed to look like their Western counterparts, but they were also located according to a classical European planning model featuring a central city and satellite cities around it (Christaller's theory⁴).

4 Otherwise called the 'central place theory', this model analyses the hierarchical location pattern of towns and cities of various sizes in southern Germany (Christaller 1933, 1966). This model has become one of the most fundamental and widely taught settlement theories in European and American planning education.

The central objective of the real estate developers was to attract urban residents through providing a pleasant natural environment, distinctive townscapes, and a modern way of living. The town was argued to also have increased value for returning expatriates, the hosting of special events, and even tourism, but in the end did not turn out to be as successful in its spatial functioning and as economically profitable as had been hoped. Bosker (2013) refers to these developments as ‘China’s Simulacrascapes’. The best-known example of these towns is the German Anting New Town in Shanghai’s Jiading district. It contains modernist architectural elements and was based on Weimar, the German city known for as the birthplace of Goethe and Schiller and the cradle of the Bauhaus. Goethe and Schiller even have their own statues in the town’s central square.

It is important to understand that these new suburbs are not copies of the actual European originals. They simply represent a stereotypical version of their European counterpart, the ‘atmosphere’ of a particular European spatial urban environment, borrowing what are their perceived most important elements. As Bosker (2013: 37) describes it: ‘within an afternoon in Shanghai, visitors can tour the Weimar Villas of Germanstyle Anting Town, stroll the granite piazza of Italian-themed Pujiang Town (or rather the “Citta di Pujiang”), and go boating on Malaren Lake in the Scandinavia of Shanghai, Luodian Town’. Furthermore, even though the name ‘New Town’ implies that these are new cities, all of these New Towns are merely extensions of already existing industrial centres around Shanghai.

Although a considerable amount of effort went into the design and promotion of these towns, the projects have problems selling on the real-estate market. As it turns out, the Chinese are not as keen to live in these areas as was anticipated. Large parts of the towns have never been sold, resulting in empty ‘ghost towns’ that are often reported in the Western media (Yang 2011). The ‘One-City-Nine-Towns’ project is now widely discussed by the international urban design community in an attempt to analyse what went wrong in its execution (see den Hartog 2010; Shen and Wu 2012; Hassenpflug 2010). The general verdict is that the houses are too expensive and not appealing to the Chinese market because the concept of a stereotypical European-like residence simply does not work in the Chinese context—especially if fundamental Chinese spatial principles are not taken into account in the design process. Dieter Hassenpflug even goes as far as to call these suburbs European ‘wallpaper’ towns and ‘travesties of the Chinese city’ (Hassenpflug 2010: 90, 104). Harry den Hartog, linking the European facades to the history of European colonialization in Shanghai, argues that these European-looking towns call the colonialization period to the minds

of the Chinese citizens, in what he calls a process of 'auto-colonization' (den Hartog 2009; 2010: 382).

To understand these suburban projects, we should be aware of two factors of influence. First is Shanghai's role as one of China's most 'modern' or 'cosmopolitan' cities: Shanghai has been one of China's biggest and most bustling cities for centuries, has historically been one of China's frontrunners in the field of urban planning (Wu and Gaubatz 2013: 66), and often takes on the role of an example city for the rest of China. Whatever new urban trend catches on in Shanghai will have a ripple effect in other Chinese cities (Rowe 2005). In 2010, Shanghai's role as the model city was highlighted by its hosting of the 2010 World Expo, 'Better City, Better Life'—an event that the city used to underscore its cosmopolitan status not just to foreign countries, but also to other Chinese cities (Dreyer 2012). It is also a place where architects, both Chinese and foreign, take on experimental projects and work in a very international environment. It is an extremely competitive and prestigious environment to deliver projects in, as a place for experimental architecture—and this has been the case since its interactions with European countries in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Campanella 2008).

Second, it is important to keep in mind Shanghai's past as the target of the colonialization practices of various other countries. Shanghai has had a particularly turbulent past when it comes to foreign interaction. Britain, France, and the United States all exploited the city and its inhabitants under semi-colonialist terms during its time as a treaty port (1842–1943). After the First Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895), Japan also became a ruling force in the city for some time. When European countries semi-ruled the city, several 'European' style blocks were built in the city centre. The French Concession; an area of former International Settlements, with former British and American enclaves; and the Bund, a large area alongside the Huangpu River, all of them featuring many buildings that are left from foreign settlements. During and after colonial times, these buildings came to painfully symbolize the subjugation of the great Chinese nation for many Shanghai citizens (Campanella 2008: 62–63). The construction of some of China's (and the world's) biggest and grandiose architectural icons such as the Oriental Pearl Tower and the high-rise office towers in Pudong—facing the Bund across the Huangpu river—could be interpreted as an attempt by Shanghai to reclaim the city from such foreign influences. The colonial quarters, the landmarks of Western imperialism, now 'look small and insignificant, huddled humbly at the feet of New China's architectural giants' (Campanella 2008: 58).

Knowing that architectural icons play a large role in the building of cities' identities, the 'One-City-Nine-Towns' plan can be seen as part of

Shanghai's process to recover from European imperialism. The city already established its recovery by overshadowing the historical European part with, among others, the massive Oriental Pearl Tower, which rises above the previous colonial quarter in an almost phallic way. Shanghai further demonstrated its role as a leading model city by hosting the world's largest (and most expensive) World Expo in 2010. By undertaking the 'One-City-Nine-Towns' plan, it showed off its economic power and status by simply 'buying' European traditions, re-constructing it according to the city's taste, and positioning it within the city. This is in essence a competitive and forward-driven attitude based on high-tier consumerism and cultural appropriation, one that reminds us of the vain exoticism that is seen all throughout Europe's colonial history. In similar, consumerist-driven ways, Shanghai has also invested in renovating and re-purposing many of the European buildings of the former settlements into luxury and expensive shops, using its history of being a (semi-)colonialized city to make profit.

For the World Expo in 2010, Shanghai Communist Party Secretary Huang Ju stated a wish to celebrate Shanghai's history as a global city. Rather than celebrating, however, Shanghai is in the process of not only reclaiming the city but also appropriating European traditional aesthetics in a way that is not a form of what den Hartog calls 'auto-colonization', but—if we have to use the word colonization at all—more likely a form of 'counter-colonization'. Whether or not the New Towns are lucrative is not really important (other areas that have European design principles, such as the Bund, for example, are very successful). Most likely, as part of China's rapidly developing and adjusting real-estate market, the space that is now the New Towns will be re-purposed at some point in time. What is most important about these so-called European 'travesties' is the fact that China has shown how it can confiscate European identity through monetary power and use it for its own profit.

Feng shui (风水, 'geomancy') in a Western context

While the above-mentioned examples of European architecture and planning are being implemented in China, Chinese ideas about the urban environment have also travelled to the West. Some of the most visible examples of Chinese concepts being implemented in a Western setting are the ideas about creating an optimal environment for living through applying the philosophy of *feng shui*.

Feng shui (风水, 'geomancy') is a philosophical and holistic approach to create and organise both the physical environment and the spiritual

aspects of one's individual life with the goal of ensuring balance between humans and their environment. The philosophical system is part of Daoism, a philosophy in which the human's relation to space plays a big role (see also Carter and Sarvimäki as well as Lacertosa, this volume).

Initially, *feng shui* as an environmental philosophy was seen in the West as childish and a 'caricature of science' (Clarke 2002: 82). Like other Asian philosophical traditions and religions, *feng shui* experienced a rise of interest in the West after the Second World War, entering mainstream Western culture as part of New Age mysticism. From there, ideas about humans being in balance with their environment entered urban design, planning, and the usage of space, since all of these fields are related to the larger philosophical question about how one ought to live (Wong 2008).

There are roughly two major audiences that seek to implement *feng shui* in spatial design. The first are expatriate Chinese business people starting projects overseas, or Western businessmen catering to this group (Donald Trump, for example, hired *feng shui* experts during the development of his Trump International Hotel & Tower in the mid-1990s). The second group consists of individuals seeking to enrich their private living environment.

In the first case, *feng shui* is applied on a large scale and is exploited for commercial means. As such, it is yet another example of cherry-picking concepts from other cultures and using them for monetary benefit. East Asian religions and ancient philosophies tend to be especially prone to these kind of practices (Mullen 2001). It is the second audience, the individuals applying *feng shui*'s environmental philosophy into their physical environment, that is most interesting for our discussion of the travel of ideas.

When it comes to Oriental mysticism, there are two possibilities of 'Othering', explains David Hess (1993) in his work on New Age Orientalism. The first Other is negative: it is 'disorderly, pathological, and commercial, not to mention motivated by deep psychological needs and the emotional pull of the religious worldview' (Hess 1993: 64). This Other possesses less knowledge than the Self. But the second Other is a positive one—a 'holistic Other mediated through exotic imagery' (Hess 1993: 46). In the case of *feng shui* philosophy being used as a valid method of enriching one's home, the individual recognizes the second kind of Other. In this regard, the individual believes that an inherently Chinese idea about spatial organization has a certain superiority over the philosophies that underlie the Western city. Admittedly, this superiority is 'only' of a spiritual kind, and thus in a way reinforces the persistent dominance of Western scientific discourse. It unmistakably verifies that 'the Other' can only be seen as having more knowledge of worldly matters from a spiritual perspective. The entire

philosophy of *feng shui* is actually rather vague; it lacks a fixed framework or static understanding of its main principles (Huang 2012), and there has been much discussion about the extent of its influence—as a part of Chinese building traditions—on the Chinese city (Meyer 1978; Hassenpflug 2010; Li, this volume). It is clear, however, that *feng shui* as a practice among individuals has had a lot of influence on people's perception of the environment, regardless of whether it is scientifically explainable (Feuchtwang 1974; March 1968).

The important thing to note is what the sudden recognition and approval of this ancient Chinese spatial philosophy tells us about current ideas of urban living in the West. John Clarke (2002) has pointed out that Daoism as a whole has played a rather invisible but indispensable role in the process of defining the Western 'Self' from the Oriental 'Other'. 'Invisible' in the sense that it is not a philosophy that has open ties to political issues or militant conflicts: Daoism and *feng shui* are much more neutral compared to some other East Asian philosophical traditions such as Confucianism. However, the interesting part is that *feng shui*, by promoting being in harmony with nature and 'slow' living, for example, argues against principles that are generally seen as an intrinsic part of 'modern' Western urban living. Underneath the spiritual aspects of the philosophy, modern practitioners of *feng shui* criticize the modern Western urban lifestyle as being too profit-driven, out of balance, void of meaning, and destructive. Ironically, this philosophy has led to much more self-doubt in the West than centuries of Christian missionaries have had on the Chinese, and is not even being facilitated by the Chinese but by Westerners *themselves*: it has 'in a sense, carried out its own counter-missionary project' (Clarke 2002: 8). As is the case with other parts of New Age-like movements, *feng shui* as it is being practiced in the West has developed into a counter-movement, a critique of modern society. In the case of *feng shui*, this critique is imported from 'the Other' rather than developed from within ourselves. The case of *feng shui* as it is used by Western individuals to criticize the 'modern Western' urban lifestyle and to search for a certain meaning of life shows how the position of the 'Self' is complex and always shifting. By choosing *feng shui*, the individual dissociates themselves from another version of the Self, which is no longer desired, thus creating two Others—the former 'Self', which is dismissed as void of meaning and no longer desirable, and the 'Other' that has helped to realize the deficits of the past Self.

Discussion

In the section above, we have discussed the travel of two concepts: European spatial planning and 'traditional' European urban aesthetics travelling to Shanghai; and New Age-impelled *feng shui* as a trend in modern Western urban living. A common theme of both these adaptations is concern: both concepts are used to counter urban dwellers' concerns about their cities and individually inhabited spaces. In the case of Shanghai, the towns in the 'One-City-Nine-Towns' plan were built as 'village'-like living in a green space—a stark contrast to the (polluted and congested) city centre. In the case of *feng shui* in Western living, the concept is being used to become more in harmony with the environment, less cluttered, and, with its focus on elements, getting 'back to nature'—all elements that practitioners miss in their usual urban environment. All of these concerns stem from anxieties that picture the city as dangerously fast-paced, poisoned, corrupt, and void of meaning.

Feng shui, as a thoroughly 'Chinese' concept and thus inseparable from its roots in 'Otherness', argues for a *Chinese* traditional means of living. It teaches the individual that the source of their unhappiness is their very 'Western-ness', and that only by rejecting or enhancing the Western 'Self' and accepting Chinese principles can the individual gain happiness and sense of meaning. In turn, the concept of European 'traditional' planning and architecture shows Shanghai's struggle with its own identity—torn between the wish to be China's model city and a history of being influenced by foreign nations. It shows that the European concept of urban planning and building aesthetics are seen as having a certain charm in China. But most of all, this large-scale project shows how Shanghai is coming to terms with its (semi-)colonial past by appropriating European planning concepts.

A central theme in the travel of both of these ideas is the strong counter-Western aspect. *Feng shui* in the West opts to reject Western ways of thinking about space and ideas about the human in their environment, instead advocating for principles based in traditional Chinese philosophies. In Shanghai's case, it is not so much about rejecting European ways of living in a city (indeed, it advocates for a form of such living by borrowing its characteristics), but more about renouncing European power and establishing Shanghai—or by extension, China as a whole—as a globally dominant player both economically and culturally. By doing so, it not only rejects Western power, but proudly places itself above it, re-conquering what was Chinese space to begin with. Although *feng shui* in the West is also exploited for monetary gain in many cases, especially on an individual level, the 'Other'

is being used to self-reflect and acknowledge that the 'Self' is incomplete. However, in the case of Shanghai, the 'Other' is usurped and contrasts between 'the Self' and 'the Other' are made even sharper in a process of exploiting the Other's aspects for monetary gain.

These practices of the production of space reflect recent developments in the relationship between China and the West. For one, it shows how China has come to terms with re-gaining much of its 'lost glory' through monetary, political, and cultural power. By advancing, it not only rejects the West, but actively starts to 'counter-colonize'. By hiring European and North-American architectural firms to produce expensive, modern cities, it buys human resources as well. In fact, China has been buying large amounts of space and real estate all over the world: Saskia Sassen (1991) for example, describes how Chinese companies acquire large corporate building projects in cities such as New York or London. Recently, this practice has extended to the acquisition of large stretches of land for private use as well. On paper, London is now increasingly owned by Chinese private or semi-private/state-owned companies (Sassen 2015). Instead of the idea that China wishes to 'become' like the West—the dominant narrative of the West's current China-focused Orientalism (Vukovich 2012)—in reality, it is in the process of establishing a certain dominance based on monetary power and space in both China and the West. Cities are also the places of the identity-searching and experiments that will eventually re-define the Self as well as 'each Other'.

Before we end this chapter, we would like to address some of the potential shortcomings of our argument. First, we acknowledge the generalizing of 'the West' as one actor in this paper. There are many cultures that we bundled together for the sake of keeping our argument short. In reality, Western countries have different perceptions of China. American Orientalism differs from European Orientalism, especially since the United States has had more recent military interaction with the East during the Second World War, which highly influenced their perspective of China and Japan (Leong 2005). However, both forms of Orientalism share the same basic beliefs and are both derived from a history of 'colonization, territorialisation, and imperialist destiny' (Leong 2005: 2–3). Second, we agree on the fact that we cannot see China only in terms of economic power, although it is often reduced to that. With economic aspects largely dominating the reports, the discussion becomes repetitive and one-sided. Although we emphasize the economic growth of China in this paper, we assume that the reader is also aware of its political and military power. This brings us to our third remark: China has had millennia of domination over other Asian countries, on a scale very much comparable to Europe's colonial practices. In this sense, we

hope not to contribute to the heroic narrative that sees China as shedding its Western colonial shackles, but rather to show that China, Europe, and North America all have a history of colonization, territorialisation, and a significant sense of imperialist destiny.

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7. A Tale of Two Courts

The Interactions of the Dutch and Chinese Political Elites
with their Cities

Ian R. Lewis

Abstract

Political centres are the manifestation of a nation: political elites express the values of a culture through the architecture of their cities' political zones. But are these constructed zones transparent or opaque? Planned or haphazard? Conforming or transforming? Protective or exposed? 'The placement of parliament buildings is an exercise in political power, a spatial declaration of political control' (Vale 2008: 10). Vale illustrates the historical construction of political cities and how they either deliberately or subconsciously project an image of their approbation to rule through the architecture and placement of government buildings. Providing a comparative study of the central government complexes in a Western and an Eastern city, I attempt to augment our knowledge of cities through the observation of city dwellers in their own habitat, specifically the political elite. Bringing together architectural, cultural, and political history, this cross-disciplinary approach deepens our awareness of the complexities of the city construct and illuminates the collective emotional roots of societies through a specific, dominant group and how they exploit their habitats within their respective cities: the Binnenhof in The Hague, The Netherlands and Zhongnanhai in Beijing, China.

Keywords: political elites, cities, space, Binnenhof (The Hague), Zhongnanhai (Beijing)

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Introduction

‘There is no doubt in my mind that the city is in addition to everything else an expression of the culture of the people who produced it, an extension that performs many complex, interrelated functions, some of which we are not even aware of’ (Hall 1982) Since Edward T. Hall first made this statement in 1966, a wealth of knowledge has been accumulated about cities and their cultural heritage—but many cultural complexities still remain hidden, particularly as we identify with the city through the prism of subjective perceptions and cultural bias.

By choosing one defined group, the political elite, who have high stakes in the construction of their cities and embody in one form or another the societies they represent, I hope to shed some light on how this group influences the shaping of their physical environment and, as a consequence, their cities. This chapter is an observation of two political elites in their own environments, encapsulated within their own particular places and historical time frames, not a comparative approach toward two cities over time.

Through an analysis of the central governmental quarters of two cities, the societies’ cultural roots, and the political histories of their respective nations, while observing the use of space in and around political buildings, a contrasting but interrelated complex structure emerges. This contrast allows us to view from a distance the intricate intertwining of the elements that shape a city, as it is embedded within its own Western or Eastern sphere. By observing one Eastern city and one Western, we have the opportunity to deepen our understanding of both.

A political elite is a group of people, corporations, political parties and/or any other kind of civil-society organization who manage and organize government and all the manifestations of political power: ‘elites may be defined as persons who, by virtue of their strategic locations in large or otherwise pivotal organizations and movements, are able to affect political outcomes regularly and substantially’ (Vergara 2013: 31-39, quoting Higley 2008).

The political elite are the decision makers whose actions control the policies that directly affect the citizens of the nation-state they rule. They are part of the executive (cabinet) and legislative (parliament) branches of government. This group is neither the business community, whose main aim is to follow financial incentives (though the two groups may well be interconnected), nor

the civil-service bureaucracy, who commonly holds office for longer time-spans and administers policy on behalf of the political rule-makers. Each generation inherits the political and physical structure from the previous one and uses the constructed city for their own requirements, adjusting to different circumstances over time.

The two cities chosen for analysis in this chapter are The Hague, the political centre of the Netherlands, and Beijing, the capital and political centre of the People's Republic of China. These cities are as different as can probably be imagined, and yet they have some commonalities: neither is the main economic heartland of their country; neither was built on a substantial river or port; and both have derived their existence from their role as political centres. Political power centres tend to acquire a metonymy for the broad political field of their respective nations: Westminster for the United Kingdom, the Kremlin for Russia, Washington for the United States, and Brussels for the European Union. For the Netherlands, the term is *Binnenhof* and for China it is 'Zhongnanhai'.

Hall introduced the hidden dimension of man's perception of social and personal space, which he called proxemics. His concept of the 'fixed-feature space' promulgates that 'buildings are (also) grouped together in characteristic ways as well as being divided internally according to culturally determined designs. The layout of villages, towns, cities and the intervening countryside is not haphazard but follows a plan which changes with time and culture' (Hall 1966: 103). Hall insists that our cities are planned constructs. Li Shiqiao (see also his chapter, this volume) revisits this approach in *Understanding The Chinese City*:

The city Mumford speaks of is a deliberate cultural construct; in the Western tradition, it has been constructed as the battlefield of life with irresistible pleasures and excruciating pains. Chinese cities are prudent in their ideals; large and vibrant though they are, they are deeply committed to spinning safety zones which double up as social structures (Li 2014: XXV).

Li provides us with a comparative emotional understanding of both Western and Eastern planned city constructs. In the Western city, the pains and pleasures of life are played out across the city, where public space is intrinsic to social life. In the Eastern city, the emphasis is in finding spaces of safety in the city and within those safety zones is where social interactions take place and where public space is considered extrinsic to social life.

Binnenhof

A brief history of the Netherlands and The Hague

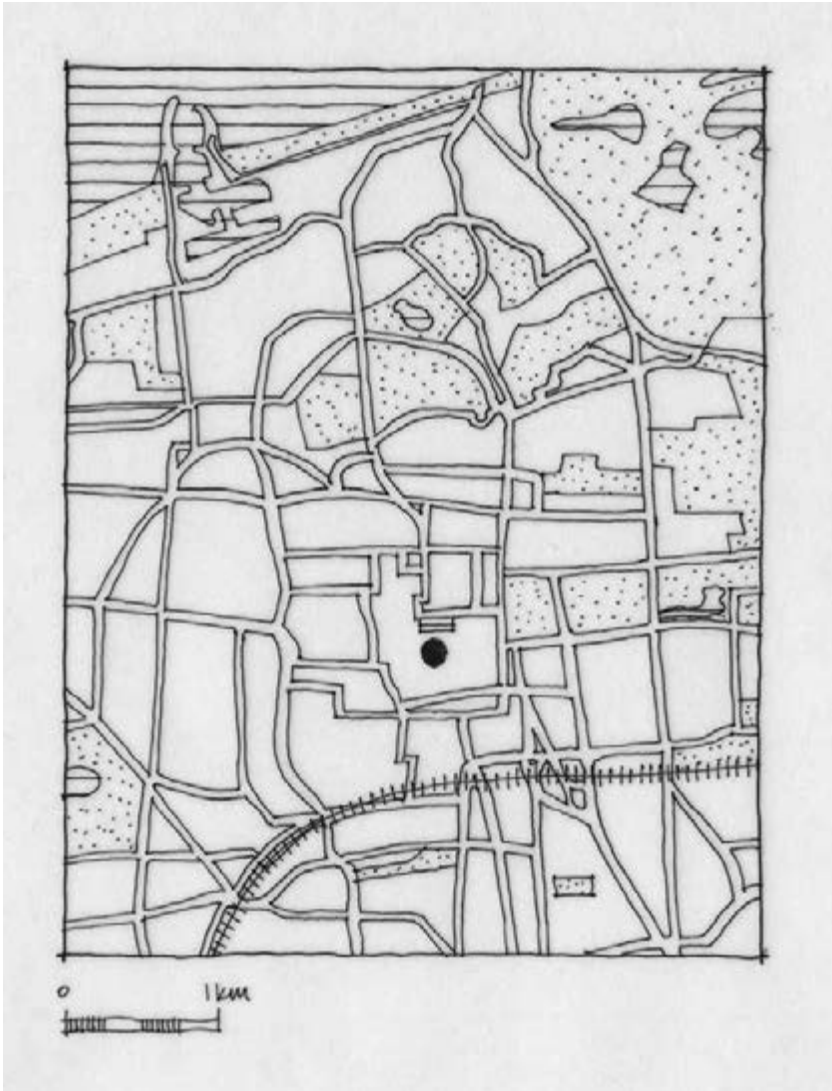
'The territories that form the provinces of present-day Netherlands really originated around the year 1000 AD' (Rietbergen 2006: 33). This region was previously inhabited and attained importance during the Roman Empire until c. 410 CE, but a cohesive local identity (excluding the Frisians in the north) was not established until later. Around 1000 CE, agricultural methods improved and more opportunities to settle in the area became possible. Also, from around 1100 CE, the ability to secure land increased substantially. A warming climate increased the sea level causing a higher need for protection from water inundation while allowing easier movement of peoples across the continent. This combination generated an increased need for flood-protected land and the transfer of new methods of construction. The first windmill used in land drainage appeared about 1200.

Fighting water, invasions, and Burgundian and Habsburg rule, local populations developed their own centres and social groupings. Slowly over the following centuries a decentralized structure emerged, run by local *regenten* (from the cities' leading families) and *stadhouders* (lieutenants appointed by the Spanish government). Political power in the region ebbed and flowed thanks to the imposition of Spanish rule from 1482,¹ as did rivalry between cities and provinces. This initiated diffuse centres of power which made a neutral meeting place necessary. Dutch, Belgian, and Luxembourg provinces were considered part of the Spanish Netherlands, but the Dutch provinces identified more with each other than with their southern neighbours. These provinces began to rebel against a Spanish rule that was increasingly striving to centralize, ruling via the court in Brussels, and promoting the Catholic faith. During the Reformation, a strict form of Protestantism had taken hold under Calvin, and this new Calvinist sect was unimpressed with the Roman Catholic approach to responsibility. Catholicism in the period favoured idolatry and guidance from priests and the Pope rather than relying on one's own individual resources and hard work. In 1579, seven rebellious provinces formed the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands,² one of the first groupings of 'independently run states'

1 In 1482, the provinces in the Netherlands were inherited by Philip I of Castile, Spain, of the Habsburg family, from his mother, the Duchess of Burgundy. They then became known as the Spanish Netherlands.

2 Sometimes referred to as the United Provinces or the Dutch Republic.

Figure 7.1 Location of the *Binnenhof* in The Hague



Source: drawing by Gregory Bracken

governing themselves in a loose alliance. The seventeenth century grew into the Dutch Golden Age, in which the 'republic' became the richest economy in the world. While the Dutch ultimately placed a king on the throne to discourage other kingdoms from attempting to rule over them, in effect they produced one of the earliest forms of democratic government.

In 1229, Count Floris IV of Holland³ purchased a piece of land adjoining a lake and forest not far from the coast, behind dunes which protected it from the sea. In the thirteenth century, acquiring such protected land was important for defence from flooding from rivers and the sea (see Figure 7.1). Even today, fifty percent of the Netherlands, which is a river delta region, requires constant protection. The central government buildings are constructed on the Count's land, which is known as the Binnenhof, or Inner Court. The Binnenhof was soon provided with a lodge, moat, gates, and a surrounding wall and, before the end of the thirteenth century, a grand meeting hall.

The Hague (*Den Haag*) did not evolve into a strong commercial or seafaring city, posing little threat to other cities; from the beginning, it found itself the neutral place of choice for leaders to reside and for political meetings to take place. On the establishment of the States-General,⁴ the forerunner to the political institutions of many Western governments today, in 1579, a more permanent place was required. This alternated between The Hague (Binnenhof), Bruges, and Brussels, until the permanent base was finally established in the Binnenhof with the formation of the United Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815. The neutral position amongst the other cities of Holland and the complexity of the edifice fit in well with the political system, which lacked a strong central authority (Smit 2015: 10). The elite were attracted to the political power and moved to or from The Hague depending on its level of influence, shaping the city's layout with their houses and businesses, providing support networks to the political centre of gravity.

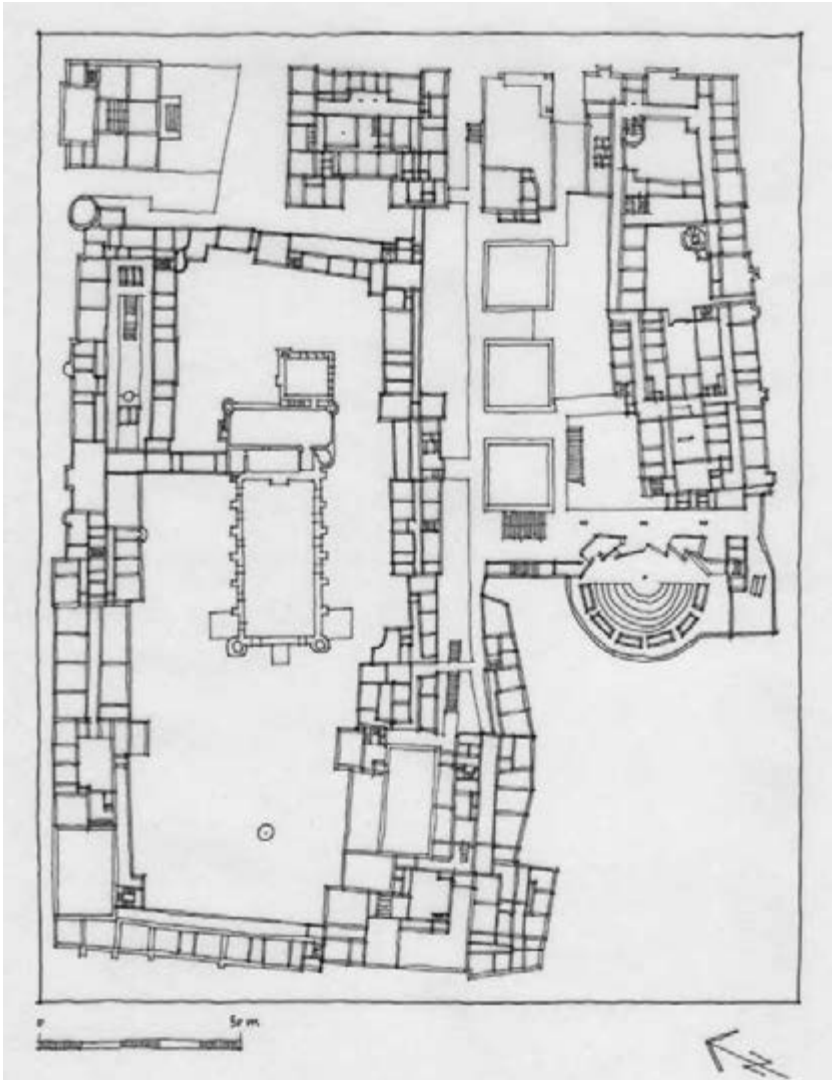
The architecture of the Binnenhof

The Binnenhof grew gradually over the centuries, accumulating buildings for homes and reception halls within its walls as required, despite the constant limitation of space (see Figure 7.2). Only two original gates remain; the moat and wall have since been replaced by buildings. To enter the Binnenhof buildings it is necessary to pass through these gates via the courtyard. The modern sections of the *Tweede Kamer* ('Second Chamber'), the House of

3 Count Floris IV of Holland was the son of Willem I, Count of Holland (c. 1167–1222), not to be confused with King Willem I of the Netherlands (1772–1843).

4 The *Staten Generaal* ('States-General') of the Netherlands began in the fifteenth century during Burgundian rule. The first meeting took place in Bruges, Belgium. In 1579 they split from the southern provinces and openly rebelled against Habsburg rule. On the introduction of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in 1815, it became a bicameral parliament with upper and lower houses, known as the first and second Chambers.

Figure 7.2 Plan of the Binnenhof



Source: drawing by Gregory Bracken

Representatives, and media offices can be accessed directly from the street. There is also a *Buitenhof* ('Outer Court'), which originally included a moat, gates, and wall, all now gone. The *Buitenhof* today contains the streets and terraces of the city.

One particular building within the Binnenhof, The *Ridderzaal* ('Hall of Knights') was first planned in 1248 by King Willem II (son of Count

Floris IV, who purchased the land) as a greeting hall for his new role as King of Germany, and later built and completed in 1295 by his son, Floris V. The *Ridderzaal* was then and remains today the largest and most impressive of all the buildings in the Binnenhof. This building, a medieval castle, provided a grand political setting for elites searching for a power base.

New buildings had to fight for space, and so the Binnenhof has developed into a series of interlocking structures that form a rectangle with an inner courtyard. The terrain, including all of the buildings, totals a modest area of approximately 30,000 square metres, equivalent to two city blocks in the Netherlands. While other countries built immense grand palaces, the Binnenhof remained small and less dramatic, attempting to keep within its original size and form. Most of its buildings imitate the houses and offices of the merchants who defined the Golden Age, which were generally narrow and four storeys high.

The Binnenhof is also one of the oldest administrative centres still in use in the world and has preserved much of the complex in its original shape and early modern appearance. Instead of the neoclassical government buildings that are found in many Western capitals, the Binnenhof does not look like a Greek temple, but more a cross between a medieval castle and a collection of Dutch canal houses (Smit 2015: 10).

In 1921, a plan by architect Daniel Knuttel for a new Second Chamber skyscraper building was firmly rejected as too expensive, too monumental, and too un-Dutch by the media and politicians alike (Smit 2015: 203). Not until 1992 did the Second Chamber receive a new building designed by architect Pi de Bruijn, who wove a modern design among the existing buildings, adding a high atrium passage (the *Statenpassage*) that ran through the centre and was accessible to all, connecting one city square to another, as well as all of the offices and function rooms: an indoor *agora* (ἀγορά), with as much daylight as possible to imitate outdoor space. Security, however, has meant that entry for the public has been restricted, so it never achieved its original aim. Interestingly, there is a parallel passageway that is accessible only to members of parliament.

Within the grounds of the Binnenhof are the parliament's first and second chambers, the offices of the Prime Minister and his department, and a number of important offices of state, such as the *Kabinet van de koning* ('King's committee') and all of the main executive and legislative branches of state. Additionally, all elected members of parliament have their own office spaces, divided into political parties, within the Binnenhof. The media also

has a building in the Binnenhof complex with access from the street and a connection to some sections of the Parliament buildings. The public has access to the central courtyard and some historical buildings, and to the second chamber during tours and parliamentary debates.

Dutch culture

European culture is a construct of particular historical periods, including the influence of various tribes, Greek and Roman civilizations, Christianity, the Renaissance, and the Enlightenment. These and other significant phases have influenced European lands to varying degrees.

Over the centuries, the Netherlands has found itself on the borders of grand European empires and this, together with the constant struggle to keep the land safe from the encroaching rivers and sea, has given the inhabitants an opportunity to develop independently, without direct rule, unlike many other parts of Europe. Hierarchy was historically less strict than in other places in Europe, and dialogue and consensus-forming was necessary. The Dutch language is generally clear and precise, adding to the impression of directness in speech and thought.

Dutch culture is thought to be a consequence of the construction of polders to secure land from inundation by the rivers and the sea. Polders are reclaimed land protected by dykes and are expensive and complicated to construct, requiring many years to complete. They first appeared around 1100 CE and were typically financed by local landowners, merchants, and the church. They required the involvement of numerous people, not only for the construction but also neighbours whose land would be affected by changes in the water routes. Investors received shares in the new polder land on its completion. Ownership of land is highly controversial, so it entailed exhaustive numbers of meetings, where disputes were solved, compromises were made, and consensus was reached. These elements are today considered normal approaches in Dutch managing and negotiating culture. There is even a Dutch word, *polderen* (to seek a compromise in order to come to an agreement), which encapsulates these elements. Within government institutions, *polderen* is to be observed on a high level.

However, it is more likely that it was not only the construction of polders that influenced this cultural approach, but rather a combination of elements (Bos et al. 2007). Because land was difficult to hold, agriculture did not always provide enough income. Towns therefore developed on the rivers and coasts, trading in commodities. These towns formed their own local governments from the merchant class who were relatively independent and

equal in status. Values such as taking responsibility for your own actions and equality amongst all citizens emerged.

Calvinism, a strict form of Protestantism that requires hard work and avoidance of the desire for material wealth (while not denying the accumulation of riches), became the dominant religion of the region and adapted easily to the local culture. This is also reflected in the architecture of the houses, which are often built along canals and tend to be lightly adorned—a tradition that is mirrored in the political buildings.

Lacking the ability to create strong bases through large landownership due to the constant fight against rivers and sea, no one group managed to dominate the region. Protestants mainly resided north of the rivers running across the region from east to west, and Catholics resided south of the rivers. The numbers of either religion and of other groups never reached significant numbers larger than another group. This led to what became known as *verzuiling* ('pillarization'), in which each group established their own societies with hospitals, schools, and newspapers. This separation is still seen in the tendency of the Dutch to partition their work and personal lives. Today there are a series of small political parties who originated in the period from the end of the nineteenth century until the 1970s.

Space is at a premium in the Netherlands, which has produced some of the most comprehensive city and transportation planning in the world. A human scale of intercommunication has curbed the construction of large-scale buildings, and it was only in more recent decades that skyscrapers have been permitted. In contrast to the buildings in the Binnenhof, today many of the ministries outside the Binnenhof are located in modern skyscrapers, having accepted the need for more floor space for their increasing population and leading the bureaucrats to feel less constrained than the central political elites. All the ministries are located within a ten-minute walking distance from the Binnenhof and situated between or close to one of the city's main railway stations.

The political Netherlands

Western politics derives its origins from the Greek and Roman periods. Here we find the Western constructed roots of how a parliament (from the *agora*, ἀγορά), a city (*polis*, πόλις), and citizenship (*civitas*) should operate and feel (see Bracken, this volume). 'The laws and politics of a Greek city emerged, then, not from the palace of a despot, but from discussion among notionally equal citizens in the *agora*, the market-place which also generally served as the arena of politics' (Minogue 1995: 12). 'The *polis* was something

to which you belonged, the place that gave you your identity [...] according to Aristotle, the *polis* completed you as a human being' (Miles 2011: 71). 'On becoming an adult, the young Greek male could step out of the household in the *agora*, where he found the freedom to transcend natural necessity and take responsibility, uttering words worth remembering and doing deeds that might give him a kind of immortality' (Minogue 1995: 13-14). The city was built by and for individuals to move easily between the private and public spheres. An emotional bond develops between the citizen and their city, deepening their connection with the public spaces.

We see a picture emerging of the city as the emotional place where men excel through dialogue and argument and where the city embraces them and they the city. The public figure was synonymous with the citizen, elected from the citizenry, and returned to ordinary citizenship again after having served the city. A politician is therefore a creature of the *polis*, a political animal.

Later in Europe's history, the Roman Empire developed from a city to an empire that spread across more than half of Europe and extended its civilization by allowing peoples to rule themselves while becoming Roman citizens and respecting Roman laws. Under the Romans the term *civitas* arose: a contract of laws that bound the people with themselves and with the city. This produced the idea of the body as a whole: being a Roman citizen meant being part of a larger whole, and the rulers—the political elite in Rome—were in charge of this body.

Following its adoption in 380 AD, Christianity took hold throughout the Roman Empire and added the layer of a divine being above the emperor and the political class, who were often perceived as too powerful and uncaring towards the citizens. This allowed the individual to be his own counsel and stand up to the state, placing his personal safety on the line, allowing his 'self' to be vulnerable. This approach regarding the individual appears over a thousand years later in the Netherlands. In the sixteenth century the Dutch put into practice self-supporting city-states and provinces where all persons could be considered equal 'selves' and where through dialogue and argument a better world could be made.

Since 1815 The Netherlands consists of a bicameral government: the Senate (first chamber) and the House of Representatives (second chamber), together referred to as Parliament. The public elects both chambers.⁵ The first chamber is there to monitor the work of the second, which in turn monitors the Cabinet. There are numerous advisory councils that advise

5 Voters directly elect representatives to the second chamber. Voters also elect members to the provincial assemblies and these members elect the representatives for the first chamber.

parliament and, in many cases, monitor parliamentary work. Dutch politics consists of open debate at every opportunity, and dialogue and argument through small political parties, some with only one member in parliament. New parties regularly emerge and all are, in theory, considered equal. Coalition governments are the norm, and consist of two or more parties who often require support from other parties that are not in the coalition.

The most influential political elites of the Netherlands are those who have risen through the ranks of their political parties and gained access to top positions in the Cabinet. The Cabinet consists of Ministers and Vice-ministers.⁶ The Prime Minister, the top political post, is from the party with the largest number of seats in the second chamber. As a constitutional state, the King (or Queen) holds an official position with limited powers and is considered part of the political elite, together with his or her family and advisers. The royal family do not live or work at the Binnenhof, but the King's committee does have its office there.

The Dutch political elite and their environment

For the political elite in the Binnenhof, direct daily contact with people from a number of fields is the order of the day. Every politician has direct access to one another via the interlocking buildings in the Binnenhof. They also dine in the Binnenhof restaurants with members of other parties, staff, the media, and even students on internships⁷—walking, metaphorically, a tightrope between being transparent and discussing sensitive issues behind closed doors, and, physically, between parliamentary chambers and their offices, the media, the public, restaurants and bars, local shops and markets, and their ministries.

All colleagues, members of the media, staff, and the public are treated as equal and most politicians try not to stand out too much. In the Netherlands the aim of equality dominates and the ranking of individuals or organizations is anathema.

6 Vice-ministers are known as State-secretaries in the Netherlands.

7 Information about the offices and movement of people in the Binnenhof was researched by the author, including visits and interviews with persons involved in the organization of the Binnenhof and members of parliament, plus research in newspapers, documentaries, news items, books, and live broadcasts related to the functioning of the central government.

Information is presented and explained as honestly and in as detailed a way as possible, even if this entails confrontation, while striving to solve problems and reach consensus. The media are informed, or live statements are made, with information considered important for the public in order to be as directly accessible as possible, which again all takes place within the Binnenhof. Certain meetings and the proceedings of the second chamber can be followed live on television. The Cabinet, including the Prime Minister, can be called before the first or second chamber. Although the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers, and party members all have designated seating in the chambers, these are arranged by party rather than by a hierarchy.

The daily business of the central government takes place within the Binnenhof. While on visits to constituencies, chat shows in media studios, or to Brussels for European Union business, the political elites are constantly in touch with colleagues at the Binnenhof through phone and social media. Only during government formation is another venue sometimes sought outside the Binnenhof. Top leaders have cars available for their work, but they are also seen walking to or from ministries, buying their own groceries from the shops nearby, and travelling by bike, tram, and train, often without staff members or even security.

All spaces are considered public domain and to be embraced, including squares, markets, local streets, and entertainment venues. Ministers can be seen talking in the corridors or in the central courtyard of the Binnenhof, often carrying their own paperwork. Private life is separate and not in the public domain; family life has a time and place, though meetings are sometimes held at home with close political colleagues.

A side consequence of the striving for transparency, the oversight from various organizations, laws to curtail any individual acquiring too much power, and the independence of the judiciary and the media, is that decisions are often discussed behind closed doors, and so are not open and transparent. Compromise and consensus often require that ideas or views are first discussed in closed environments before being aired in a public space in order to reduce serious conflict with a resultant reduction in the opportunity for consensus. The Dutch term for this is *Achterkamertjespolitiek* ('back-room politics'). Information from these meetings that reaches the public domain is strenuously orchestrated.

Zhongnanhai

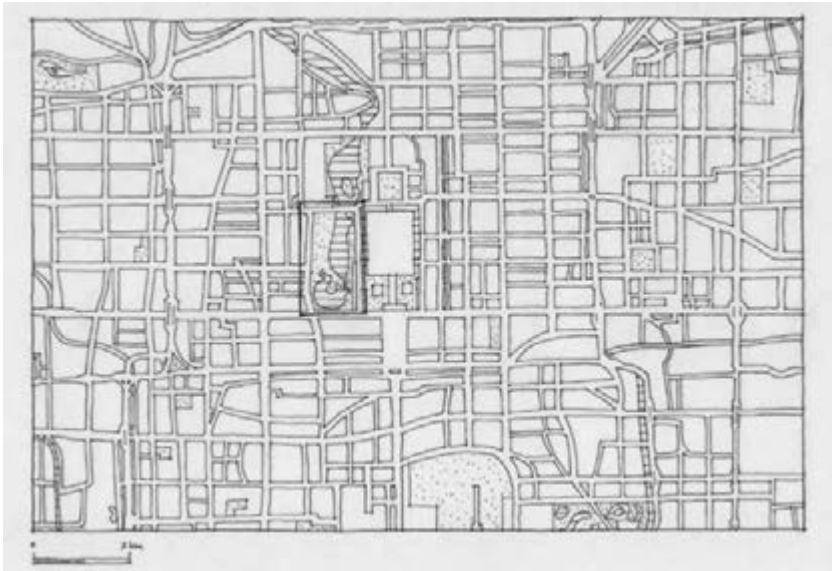
A brief history of imperial China and Beijing

China is the oldest continuous civilization in the world. Their writing system dates back to the Shang period (c. 1200 BCE). When this ancient writing was discovered on oracle bones it required little interpretation as modern Chinese characters could easily be discerned, adding to this sense of continuity (Gascoigne 1973:13). The earliest periods of Chinese civilization began around the basin of the Yellow River (Huang He), which is considered the origin and heart of China's civilization. *Zhongguo* (中国, 'Middle Kingdom') is the Chinese name for the country. Over the centuries, the Yellow River has done its best to defy control. Numerous major changes in course and severe floods destroyed cities and caused millions of deaths. Controlling the river meant controlling power in the region. So there developed a link between the strongman, who controlled the river and hence the region, and the power of nature. Gradually the kings and later emperors attained the position of 'god' on earth, with a highly ritualistic life aimed at appeasing the 'god' of heaven.

Beijing's origins may be traced to around 1045 BCE. It was the regional capital for a number of dynasties over the centuries, demolished and rebuilt nearby by each successive dynasty. Beijing lies north of the Yellow River, and as early as 600 CE the Grand Canal was completed to connect Beijing to the south and supply much needed water.⁸ It was not an obvious choice for the location of a city but as Jasper Becker informs us, '[i]t was a terminus at the junction of two worlds, where a finger of the vast north China plain points north and meets a southerly extension of that great belt of rich grasslands that stretches as far as the Carpathian Mountains. Unlike most other great cities of the world, it is not served by a river or a seaport' (2008: 16).

In 1279, around the time the Binnenhof was being constructed, Beijing was declared the capital of the Yuan Dynasty by Kublai Khan, a grandson of Genghis Khan, whose Mongol clan descended from the north, gradually and effectively taking control of China and installing a new dynasty. Kublai had a number of capitals, eventually settling on Beijing, which he called

8 The Grand Canal can be dated to the fifth century BCE, but the connection of all the sections occurred during the Sui Dynasty (581–618 CE). It is the longest canal system in the world and today a UNESCO World Heritage site. Currently it is under renovation to again help supply water from the south to the north of China.

Figure 7.3 Location of Zhongnanhai in Beijing

Source: drawing by Gregory Bracken

Dadu (大都), the Great Capital. As the capital, Dadu was also the political centre of all China. Kublai employed Chinese advisers and architects who worked with an ancient blueprint for a city, *The Rites of Zhou*,⁹ thereby adding legitimacy to his dynasty (Wang 2011: 48).

The Yuan Dynasty was overthrown by the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), led by Emperor Hongwu who set up a new capital in Nanjing in the southern part of China. As in previous dynastic replacements, the former capital (Dadu/Beijing) was destroyed. When Emperor Hongwu perished he bequeathed the throne to his grandson, skipping a generation. This was not to the liking of Zhu Di (Emperor Yongle), the fourth son of Emperor Hongwu. Based in Beijing, where his father had installed him, he launched an attack on Nanjing to claim the throne. Four years later he achieved his goal of taking control of the dynasty and decided to deny the power centre in the south, destroying the royal city in Nanjing,¹⁰ and rebuilding

9 *The Rites of Zhou* is a work on bureaucracy and organization that appeared in China sometime around the second century BCE. A section of this work under the title *Kaogongji* (*Record of Trades*) covers architecture, with extensive details on how to build an imperial city.

10 Emperor Hongwu had also constructed a grand palace and imperial city at Nanjing based on the previous capitals and *The Rites of Zhou*. It took 21 years to construct, from 1368, and was

the capital in the north, in Beijing, his familiar territory. This was also a strategic choice as a defence against the Mongols who continued to threaten China. Zhu Di constructed a completely new city, with many layers of structural spaces. The city was divided by a series of walls within walls, and was erected between 1406 and 1420. Like Dadu, the design was based on *The Rites of Zhou* (and therefore on previous capital cities) and built on the ruins of the demolished Dadu. 'In city planning, Beijing of the Ming Dynasty was, in principle, modelled after Chang'an, the capital of both the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-907) Dynasties' (Liang Sicheng, quoted in Wang 2011: 46).

'Zhou Li says: "Here where Heaven and Earth are in perfect accord, where the four seasons come together, where the winds and the rains gather, where the forces of Yin and Yang are harmonized, one builds a royal capital"' (Zhu 2004: 34). *Zhou Li's Rites of Zhou* city blueprint was not just about construction but also about the location in harmony with nature and the gods. In other words, the capital of the empire is not only a social and political centre but also a pivotal point that mediates and unifies the cosmos and the human world, sustaining the grand harmony of the entire universe. *Zhou Li* therefore offers not only a description of what a capital city should be, but also 'an ideology of kingship with a spatial diagram of the centre, the capital, the empire and the cosmos' (Zhu 2004: 34).

This Imperial City contained the Emperor's home and office complexes, which we know today as the Forbidden City. Within this complex was an Inner Court, the household section, and an Outer Court, the state or work section. The Imperial City surrounding the Forbidden City also included what are now Tiananmen Square and the lake and garden areas. This city structure was the largest and most magnificent palace complex anywhere in the world. The general population was denied access to the Forbidden City and required special permission to enter certain sections of the Imperial City. Even the political elites only had occasional and restricted access to the Outer Court of the Forbidden City.

When the Qing (Manchu) Dynasty claimed power in 1644 they simply moved in. Unlike previous dynastic transitions, they did not destroy the capital. Many of the palaces and pavilions in the grounds of the imperial gardens around the artificial lakes to the west of the Forbidden City were added during Qing rule. This area was later to become known as Zhongnanhai (central and southern lakes). The Qing Dynasty finally collapsed

destroyed not long after, in 1403. The city walls are the largest ever constructed in China and part of the remains can still be viewed today.

in 1911. The last Emperor was allowed to continue living in the Forbidden City until 1924 but had been stripped of his powers.

Almost 40 years later, in 1949, following a devastating period of modern Chinese history, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) led by Mao Zedong gained control of China. A decision was made to appoint Beijing as the capital again, as the north was considered a safer location to rule the country than the south, where their enemies, the Kuomintang,¹¹ had their capital at Nanjing. Despite the difficult period between the collapse of the Qing Dynasty in 1911 and the arrival of the CCP in 1949, the royal city had been left intact despite the activities of warlords, the Japanese invasion, and a civil war. On entering Beijing, the military wing of the Party, the PLA (People's Liberation Army), had orders to protect all of the historic buildings and monuments (Wang 2011: 72). The Communists set up their central Party headquarters and accommodation in the imperial gardens of the Forbidden City and have remained there ever since (see Figure 7.3). This seemed to be an unusual move from a Party that wished to erase the structures and culture of the dynastic period from Chinese history and replace them with common ownership and an absence of social classes. "The emperors lived in Zhongnanhai, why can I not live here?" Mao reportedly said. Soon all the top officials were moving themselves into the minor palaces, or *wangfu*, of the Qing aristocracy' (Becker 2008: 165).

The architecture of Zhongnanhai

Just northwest of Tiananmen Square in central Beijing is a vast complex, surrounded by oxblood-red walls and strewn with security cameras, called Zhongnanhai. It was once part of the imperial palace, used for fertility and harvest rites. Today it houses the highest offices of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the compound of the top state (that is, government) administrative body, the State Council (Nathan 2002: 6).

From satellite images of the buildings in Zhongnanhai, one can see that inside the gates of the main wall surrounding the whole site there are a series of roads and separate gateways to the various blocks of buildings that are

11 The Kuomintang (also Guomindang) were the Nationalist Party of China who ruled from 1927–1949. They fought the Communist Party for control of China during the Civil Wars (1927–1950). When the Communists finally won, the Kuomintang fled to Taiwan and established a government there. They are still one of Taiwan's political parties.

laid out in defined clusters. The complex contains two distinct administrative parts. The southern sector contains the Party Centre, where the main sections of the ruling party's committees reside.¹² In the northern sector are offices related to the administration of the country (see Figure 7.4).¹³

No structure in the complex is higher than four storeys. Many of the buildings are square-shaped, comprising inner courtyards with gardens. In some cases there are also sports facilities, such as tennis courts and swimming pools. Only the roofs can be seen peeking above the walls. The whole complex, including the lakes, is surrounded by a high wall and guarded entrances. The entire enclosed area (excluding the lakes) is around 500,000 square metres.¹⁴ This extensive structure highlights the search for protected or safe zones within the city and away from the open public space.

The Soviet Union provided support to the Chinese communists for rebuilding their war-torn country after 1949. Soviet architects drew up many of the plans for preparing the new capital. The Forbidden City was allowed to stay, but the surrounding Imperial City was opened up, with city walls and gates demolished. Tiananmen Square, formally part of the Imperial City, was opened to the public and chosen as the central point of the modern city and the country. Ten Great Buildings¹⁵ were erected in 1959, including the Great Hall of the People, housing the National People's Congress, on the west side of Tiananmen Square. Large avenues were constructed, keeping to the original layout of a grid system.¹⁶ Following the collapse of the last Dynasty in 1911, Beijing suffered from years of neglect. Now the city could once more class itself as a great city in the modern world. The six-lane¹⁷ main east-west road, Chang'an Avenue, which runs

12 What is known as the Party Centre occupies the southern sector of Zhongnanhai. This consists of the private offices of the General Secretary and other members of the Politburo Standing Committee (PBSC), the Party Secretariat, which coordinates Party activities, and the Central Office, which handles administration for the other south Zhongnanhai offices (Nathan et al. 2002: 6-7).

13 The northern sector of Zhongnanhai contains the state offices, including the private offices of the premier and those of his vice-premiers and state councillors, who are senior members.

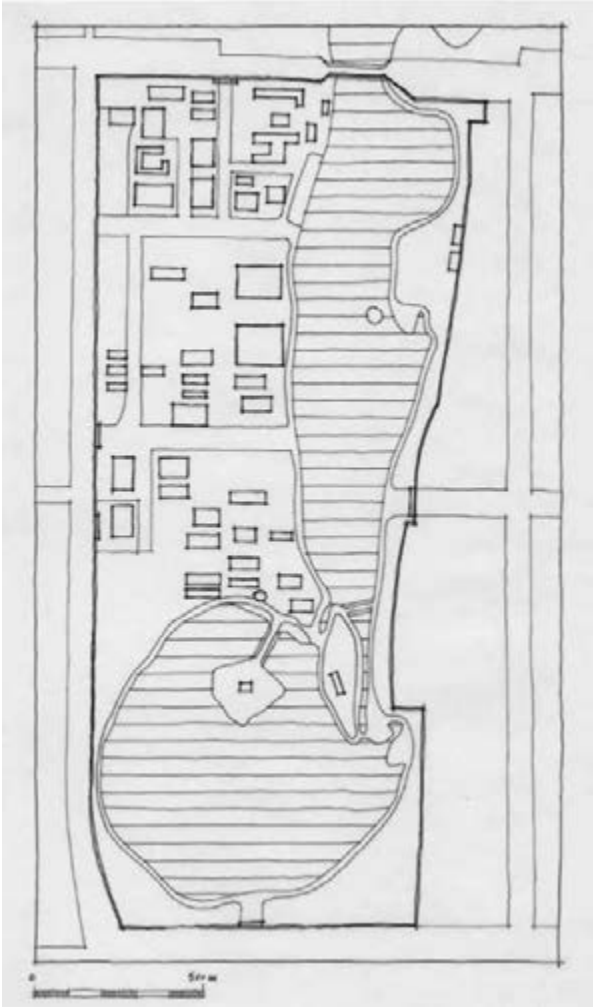
14 For comparison, the Vatican City is 440,000 square metres.

15 The 'Ten Great Buildings' were commissioned to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the People's Republic of China. They incorporated International, Stalinist, and Chinese historical styles. They changed the image of Beijing from a city of small low-rise buildings and hidden courtyards to a grand city comparable to the leading cities in the world.

16 'In the city, there shall be nine north-south and nine east-west streets. The north-south streets shall accommodate nine chariot-ways. Together they form a chessboard street pattern' (quote from *Kaogongji*, in Zhu 2004: 32).

17 Chang'an Avenue was expanded to ten lanes on the sixtieth anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China in 2009.

Figure 7.4 Plan of Zhongnanhai



Source: drawing by Gregory Bracken

just south of Zhongnanhai and the Forbidden City, became the site for many of the ministries, who chose to build monumental office blocks. This was in contrast to Zhongnanhai, where modest buildings were erected, or existing buildings converted.

Central-government buildings in Beijing have, until recent times, followed the Soviet Union's architectural style. Some were modest in size, others large, though generally wide rather than tall. This is in keeping with both the idea of width over height, the preferred choice to avoid upsetting the gods

(and to not exceed the height of the buildings in the Forbidden City). Since restrictions have been softened, some ministries are now housed in modern skyscrapers. However, there remains a ban in the vicinity of Zhongnanhai so that no buildings tower over the centre of power.

Ministry buildings have their own separate space: a section of land separated from the buildings next to them, with a *yamen* (衙门, 'office compound'), and a fenced-off area with their own gate and security entrance, a common approach for many buildings in China (Zhu 2004: 67). Inside the compound building or series of buildings there is normally more than one organization. A ministry compound will normally contain organizations related to that ministry, which in Western countries would usually have their own offices somewhere else to consider themselves more independent. In China, having related offices close to each other is considered more efficient. Most will also have their own services, such as travel agents, catering, cleaning services, child care, postal services, and some even have shops on-site to make them as self-sufficient as possible. This recalls the role of the *danwei* (单位, 'work unit') of the former state-owned enterprises during Mao's period, which were designed to look after a person from cradle to grave: each person would be educated, employed, fed, clothed, housed, cared for, married, and buried, both directly and indirectly through the organization to which they were assigned.¹⁸

The spaces between the buildings in and between Zhongnanhai and the ministries and government buildings outside are not obvious. Li Shiqiao (this volume and also, in greater detail, 2014), discusses public space as perceived in a very different way than Western spatial constructs. He highlights the term *jianghu* (江湖, literally 'rivers and lakes') to help us understand how these spaces are outside the protected space of home. These *jianghu* have a non-definition, leaving it up to the individual to interpret them, not in any organised or planned way. Often these are neglected spaces. The Chinese perception of outside space, Li argues, is of a place of danger, uncontrolled. The home, office, school, hospital, or university becomes a zone to be protected, where the 'self' can be safe with one's associates in zones that double as social structures (Li 2014: XV).

18 The author carried out observational research around Zhongnanhai, interviewed Dutch academics and government officials who had business trips in Beijing, and arranged research on the placement of government ministries plus research from documentaries, books, maps, articles, and films on the Chinese government, Beijing, and Zhongnanhai.

Chinese culture

Chinese culture is a glorious, rich tapestry that is impossible to cover in a few paragraphs. This tapestry has been woven over the centuries and incorporates religion and nature through Daoism and Buddhism; morality, law, and societal structure through Confucianism and Legalism. Daoism teaches the way or path of oneness with the universe, flowing with nature, living in harmony; Buddhism teaches to search for wisdom, to be aware of your thoughts and actions. Confucianism espouses virtue through benevolence and rituals;¹⁹ Legalism, that people are inherently bad and require laws to control their actions.

The Chinese approach to life is one of striving for harmony or balance, acceptance of your fate, searching for your best attributes, respecting people who have wisdom—parents, elders, teachers, and those at the top of their fields—and control through moral and preventive perspectives. Confucianism, in contrast to Legalism, begins with the premise that people are inherently good but require moral rules to guide them. Originally Confucius was focused on encouraging emperors to take care of their people and developed a moral code in which the more powerful position is taught to be benevolent to the one in the weaker position: such as the relationship between emperor and subject, minister and secretary, or father and son. In this approach the son looks up to and never questions his father and will look after him in his old age, while the father will nourish, guide, support, and promote his son. Both are dependent on each other, so an acceptance or balance of their roles and a harmony in their approach toward each other is required. Confucianism has become embedded in the relationships between people of different ages and ranks, where it is accepted that one should not question, at least publicly, a person in a higher rank than you.

More than philosophies or religions, family dependency relationships and *guanxi* (关系, 'personalized connections') have perhaps the deepest roots. In the highly centralised state under the emperor's rule, family became the main support structure. During the Han Dynasty (141 BC – AD 1) rules were introduced for groups of 5 to 10 households to be run together in a self-sufficient manner, providing taxes and soldiers to the government while supporting themselves for their daily needs without help or interference from the government (Keay 2008: 145-6). Today, Chinese

19 The Confucian virtue of *ren* (仁, 'benevolence') signifies excellent character and is in accordance with *li* (礼, 'ritual norms'), *zhong* (忠, 'loyalty to one's true nature'), *shu* (恕, 'reciprocity'), and *xiao* (孝, 'filial piety'). Together these constitute *de* (德, 'virtue'). For further information on some of these concepts, see Bracken, this volume.

individuals will turn first to family and friends for any type of support. This is often linked to the collectivist approach, where the group rather than the individual together decides each individual's role in life in relation to the group.

China politically

In court political structure,

first, there is the inner court and a corporeal space where eunuchs and court ladies served the body and the person of the emperor. Second, there is an outer court and an institutional space where secretaries, ministers and high-ranking officials assisted the emperor in his rule over the empire (Zhu 2004: 7).

Zhu provides us with some details here from The *Kao gong ji* ('Artificers' Record') from *The Rites of Zhou* (during the Western Zhou 1066-256 BCE) which lays out the structure for the construction of a royal city. This consists of various layers of city walls, one within the other, until inside the emperor's court there is further division depending on the ranking of his entourage.

Male members of the royal family received important functions in the government dependent on their ranking (within a series of nine grades), and could enter and leave the inner courts of the Forbidden City. The emperor had close officials who looked after both his personal and state affairs, who often became his trusted friends.

Originating at least from 1000 BCE, layers of structure emerged to place the emperor and his closest advisors in the centre, both physically in the inner court of the Forbidden City and metaphorically as the centre of the universe on earth. A system developed that is also visible today: the central core as the highest layer, ringed by the ministries and other government buildings, then the main cities, such as Beijing and Shanghai, then the regions (provinces), counties, townships, villages.

Soon after founding the Ming Dynasty in 1380, Emperor Hongwu abolished the role of the prime minister, a role that had existed for around 1500 years, thus changing the relationship between the emperor and the mandarins (bureaucratic scholars) and government ministers. This created full direct leadership and centralised power for the emperor, but also gave more work and control to his close advisers and less to the ministries. For most of the Ming and Qing dynastic periods, structure of government was as follows. First was the General Secretariat, which over time became the

de facto highest institution.²⁰ This was situated on the lower west side of the outer court near the exit of the Forbidden City. Under the General Secretariat came the six ministries, situated in order of rank outside the Forbidden City but inside the Imperial City, parts of which were either forbidden or restricted to the general public. The Imperial City included Tiananmen Square, where these six ministries were situated, and then the rest of the city, followed by regional- and finally county-level prefectures (Zhu 2004: 136).

The Communist Party that attained power in 1949 and remains in power today placed itself as the central guiding force steering the country. Having suffered for almost 40 years from chaos and wars, the Chinese population was ready for a centralised, benevolent, authority that promised to take care of all their needs. The communists set about designing a hierarchical organization based on Leninist ideology but following existing patterns of dynastic governmental structures.

In China inequality is expected and the ranking of individuals, organizations, universities, companies, cities—in fact, pretty much everything—is embedded both within organizational structures and in the minds of the Chinese themselves. In Chinese government circles every level of the Communist Party is ranked, beginning with the Chairman as Number One. A Politburo member, the inner circle at the top of the pyramid, is ranked higher than any other person in the party, and the Central Military Commission has a higher status than a Ministry.

This ranking system gives insight into the placement of party government units. According to Lawrence and Martin (2013: 20), the highest ranked organs of the Party are, from highest to lowest:

1. Communist Party Central Committee
2. Party and State Central Military Commissions
3. The State Council
4. National People's Congress Standing Committee (NPCSC)
5. Chinese People's Political Consultative National Committee
6. State Presidency

The offices of all of these units are located within the walls of Zhongnanhai compound. Every other organ of government starting from one rank lower is located outside the compound, included the National People's Congress, which is officially 'the highest organ of state power' (Lawrence 2013: 4-18).

20 The General Secretariat allows for a maximum of six appointments at any one time.

Within the Communist Party Central Committee is the Politburo, consisting of 25 members,²¹ and from this comes the Politburo Standing Committee (PSC), currently consisting of seven members, which is the most powerful decision-making body in China. The PSC is headed by the General Secretary of the Party, who is also the President and head of the military and therefore the most important and powerful person in the country (McGregor 2010: 16). In the ranking order, his role of General Secretary is highest (1), followed by military chief (2), and last as President (6).

The State Council (3) is headed by the premier, Number Two in the PSC, and runs the day-to-day affairs of the country, something equivalent to the executive branch of a western government. The Ministries fall under its control.

The NPCSC (4) is the body overseeing the legislative branch, the National People's Congress. The actual congress is in principle the same as a parliament, but in practice carries out the recommendations of the NPCSC and therefore of the party.

The Communist Party has created a structure called congresses to oversee the actual layers of the government, from the National People's Congress down to the provincial, county, city, municipal districts, and township. The Party has committees at all levels, from the county level upwards, which each have a higher rank than their respective congress. Top-level leaders are expected to have worked their way up through these committees. This binds the governing structure through lines of direct communication through the inner workings of the party structure and ensures hidden or protected control over governmental business at all levels.

The Chinese political elite and their environment

For the Chinese elite in Zhongnanhai, daily direct contact is somewhat formalized. Secretaries coordinate diaries and arrangements for meetings between the main leaders. The main secretaries play a leading role and often become top-level leaders themselves. The leaders have their own separate offices, buildings, and floors ranked according to their status.

21 The 25 members of the Politburo includes seven members of the Politburo Standing Committee, six regional party leaders (from Beijing, Shanghai, Tianjin, Chongqing, Guangdong, Xinjiang), two military figures, five leaders of central party organs and commissions, three Vice-Premiers, one Vice-President, and the head of the national trade union federation. They are elected every five years, for a maximum of ten years. On retirement they become elder statesmen with an honoured role, although with limited political influence.

Walking around the compound is done normally to relax in the gardens by the lakes, where some more informal meetings may take place. Families are sometimes brought to the compound to be nearby, and some children and grandchildren attend school within the compound. Leaders may know each other's wives or husbands and children. It is not uncommon to meet with another colleague at home to build or reinforce relationships. Decisions are made by consensus in the Politburo, normally from requests put forward through the Party, military, State Council (executive), NPCSC (legislative), and certain important ministries. These decisions are then distributed for the organs of government to decipher and implement. The media are informed by prepared documents that are expected to be distributed to the public as presented (McGregor 2010). The minutes of meetings are not available to the media or public. Only the National People's Congress is shown live on television.

Sessions of the State Council (government) and the Politburo (party) are regularly held in the buildings in the compound of Zhongnanhai. These follow strict procedures of protocol and status. They may sometimes have an informal feel, with the leaders sitting in large armchairs facing those attending. During the summer months, many meetings of the political elite may take place in their favoured summer resort on the coast, Beidaihe (Nathan 2002: 38). Other meetings during the year may happen in the Western Hills area of Beijing. A good amount of entertainment, in the form of dining in particular hotel restaurants, members' clubs, or even karaoke bars also takes place, often with family and friends. Informal discussions on important matters may occur on the edges of these informal contacts. These are safe territories within one's own network.

Entering Zhongnanhai requires a high security clearance, and you must be expected. The top elites have their own clearance, as do those who are accredited to attend the State Council and the Politburo, plus the staff (with a local rank clearance) and top military generals. Others, such as many provincial governors, require an invitation. In the squares in front of the halls few gather: these are open, empty spaces. Leaders entering the walled entrance compounds of the ministries move inside as quickly as possible; they do not linger in the open space of the large courtyards.

Party members of high rank have direct access to all government compounds and their private chauffeur-driven cars can speed them in and out without being required to stop at checkpoints (McGregor 2010: 71). A few ministries are within walking distance, but it would be extraordinarily unusual for staff members working for the top level leaders to walk and could bring into question the whole ranking structure. Top political leaders

do not walk to work. When President Obama was seen coming down the steps of Air Force One in China carrying his own umbrella, the Chinese nation was mesmerized. The President of China has his own staff to carry an umbrella over the President's head ('With Umbrella, Obama Convinces China', 2009).

The mere presence of Politburo members, the highest rank, can close off whole buildings so they are screened from the public and even government employees. They are steered clear of the risk of accidentally coming into contact with anyone not of their rank. There are even underground roads from Zhongnanhai to the People's Congress (tunnels left over from Mao Zedong's fear of nuclear war with the Soviet Union in the late 1960s) to travel between buildings without needing to cross the streets.

The Chinese ministry complexes are scattered at some distance from Zhongnanhai, mainly east and west but also north and south. Zhongnanhai is therefore in the centre, with the ministries surrounding it. There seems to be no obvious connection between them in relation to physical distance, though there appears to be a ranking in distance, with the Ministries of Defence, Finance, and Economics closer in proximity to Zhongnanhai than others. This is in keeping with the layers of protection and control but appears to deviate from the strict spatial placing of ministries under dynastic rule.

Conclusion

Edward T. Hall declared, 'we learn from the study of culture that the patterning of perceptual worlds is a function not only of culture but of relationship, activity, and emotion' (Hall 1982: 181). We have observed how the political elite of the Netherlands and China construct and use their political space. Through historical and cultural traits, a contrast emerges of the interpretation of the private and public, the inner and the outer spaces.

In the Netherlands we have seen the desire to keep things in scale, reinforce the open dialogue of the Greek and Roman heritage through architecture and culture, shorten the lines of direct communication, promote the ideal of equality, avoid appearing to present an order of ranking, and represent the body of the nation through the self. The desire is to bring the inner (workings of the government) to the outer (public domain), for the self to be vulnerable in order to survive, and to embrace the open space as a platform for the exchange of knowledge, this providing the best protection, the care of the self.

In China we have seen the desire to bring balance and harmony, the control of inner spaces, the cultivation of the family as the core, to seek wisdom and moral standing, embrace Confucianism, espouse the hierarchy of rankings, and represent the nation through the protected inner core of the political family, with the self being a part of that family. Historically, *The Rites of Zhou* provided the building blocks of architectural order with layers of protected spaces. These are manifested in the layers of hierarchical space of the political organs of state, which are designed to provide degrees of care for the political elites. The desire is to protect the inner (workings of the government) from the outer (public domain), to defend the family, party, and country from the dangers of open, unsupervised, *jianghu* spaces: for the self to be protected in order to survive, and to ignore or avoid lingering in outer spaces as the best protection, the care of the self.

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8. Urban Acupuncture

Care and Ideology in the Writing of the City in Eleventh-Century China

Christian de Pee

Abstract

During the eleventh century, literati of the Song Empire (960–1279) tried, for the first time, to capture the experience of urban space in writing. Rather than a purely literary experiment, this effort constituted part of an attempt to discern a universal moral pattern in the apparent chaos of city life. Whoever succeeded in representing the city in a manner that was both accurate and coherent, both comprehensive and dynamic, would thereby demonstrate a complete understanding of economic activity, the necessary basis for perfect governance and lasting order. Because money and commerce brought to urban residents the goods they required to survive, literati reasoned that money and commerce must be beneficent, and because they were beneficent, they must conform to natural principles, as all that was enduringly sustaining of life and well-being must be rooted in nature. And because money and commerce conformed to a natural pattern, the city must function like a living organism. In the 1030s and 1040s, literati were confident that they stood near the discovery of this enduring moral pattern, and to the restoration of the perfect governance of antiquity. By the end of the eleventh century, however, their hopes were defeated through violent debate. In exile and retirement, discouraged men began to seek the pattern of all things in themselves rather than in society, and resolved to establish moral order in their family and community rather than throughout the empire. This endeavour turned them back toward the countryside, away from the city. A literary and intellectual history of the city in the eleventh century thus traces a shift in the care of the self, from an ambition of securing the prosperous health of the empire and its subjects through universal policy, to an attempt to approach universal truth through individual cultivation and local action.

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During the eleventh century CE, the Chinese city emerged into writing. In prior centuries, literati had written the city only in an ideal form or in the past tense. In 547 CE, for example, Yang Xuanzhi (楊銜之) recreated in prose the pagodas and temples of Luoyang that a few decades before had towered over the imperial avenues but that now lay in ruins along overgrown streets (see *Luoyang qielan ji*: 2). Cui Lingqin (崔令欽, fl. 730s–760s) recorded his memories of the music and dance in the capital of the Tang Empire (618–907) at Chang’an after the rebel armies of An Lushan (安祿山, 703–757) had set the imperial court to flight and laid waste to the city (see *Jiaofang ji*: 243). Duan Chengshi (段成式, d. 863) commemorated his visit to the imposing monasteries of Chang’an only after those monasteries had been closed or destroyed by imperial decree (see *Youyang zazu*: 245–263; Ditter 2011). Sun Qi (孫棨) wrote down anecdotes about courtesans, examination candidates, and the pleasure quarters in Chang’an after the imperial court had once more abandoned that city to marauding armies, and during the 950s Wang Dingbao (王定保, b. 870) collected memories and written documents about the examination rituals of the Tang Empire that he thought would never be restored (see *Beili zhi*: 252–253; *Tang zhiyan*: 3.24–25; Feng 2015: 112–134; Moore 2004). Other genres of literary composition occluded the urban streetscape. Although Tang literati vied to live and serve in Chang’an and Luoyang, they did not introduce shops or markets into their poetry or prose. They made generic references to the rumbling traffic of carts and horses, but otherwise set their scenes within enclosed gardens and parks, or in the suburban countryside. It was only during the eleventh century that literati began to write the city in the present tense, attempting to capture in poetry and prose their experience of urban space. In the process, they filled in the streets and avenues that the writers of the Tang had left open:

Riding to Work I Look at the Markets, by Song Qi (宋祁, 998–1061)

On the way to work I gallop my scrawny horse,
 Looking upon a hundred warehouses in the clear morning.
 The wine shops are loud as the entire market is washing dishes;
 The pipes are warm as the stalls have started selling malt sugar.

Flowing water fleets along with the light carriages;
 Flying blossoms send off the fluttering saddlecloths.
 Insipidly the guards stand by the market gates;
 Certainly the immortal Zizhen is not among them (*Jingwen ji*: 8.87).¹

As the literati of the 1030s and 1040s made a place for the city in writing, they did not reject the traditional literary orientation toward the natural landscape, but rather encompassed urban life within that traditional orientation. They wrote the city because they perceived the city as a natural landscape and as a living organism. The writing of the city thus constituted part of the more general search in the eleventh century for an immanent, universal pattern in human behaviour and in the natural world. Knowledge of this pattern had enabled the rulers of sacred antiquity to align human society with the moral cosmos, and to establish lasting peace and prosperity. The literati of the eleventh century worried that the prolific activity of their time made this unifying pattern more difficult to perceive, but they also trusted that the pattern persisted and that they stood nearer to its discovery than any generation since antiquity.

By the end of the eleventh century, however, the epistemological optimism of the 1030s and 1040s had yielded to an intellectual crisis. Ambitious institutional reforms, though conceived by men of brilliant learning and justified by reference to ancient writings, failed to secure peace or create prosperity, and inimical factions proved incapable of convincing each other of the intrinsic merit of their proposals. As defeated officials travelled into exile or retirement, they began to seek the pattern of all things in themselves rather than in society, and resolved to establish moral order in their family and in their community before making another attempt at reforming the laws and customs of the empire. This endeavour turned them back toward the forested mountains and the countryside, and away from the city. Whereas an earlier generation had hoped to grasp the unifying pattern of all things by discerning ordered regularities in the apparent chaos of urban life—“The transformations are expansive and difficult to name,/ Like painting the capital in coloured pigments’ (*Luancheng ji*: 5.118)—literati of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries dismissed the city as a site

1 The pipes presumably were warm from the hot syrup that was drained from a boiling mash of grain and malt in the process of making malt sugar (see Huang 2000: 457–60). The ‘immortal Zizhen’ is Mei Fu (梅福, fl. 7 BCE–1 CE) who became an immortal after retiring from the Han court. ‘Later, some people saw Fu in Kuaiji. He had changed his name and served as a guard at the gate of the market of Wu’ (*Hanshu*, 67.2927).

of frivolous consumption and a reminder of failed policies. A literary and intellectual history of the city in the eleventh century thus traces a shift in the care of the self, from an ambition to secure the prosperous health of the empire and its subjects by means of universal policy to an attempt to approach universal truth by means of individual cultivation and local action.

The city natural

During the eighth and ninth centuries, the land south of the Yangzi and Huai rivers was colonized and settled on an unprecedented scale. In the fertile southeast, irrigation canals and norias conveyed the abundant water from lakes, rivers, and streams to spreading expanses of diked paddies. Successive improvements in hydraulic technology and agricultural techniques assisted hard-working farmers in producing increasing harvests of rice and secondary crops. The surplus yields from these fertile lands sustained a growing population that engaged in ever more specialized agriculture and trades, and enough remained to be sold in market towns and shipped by merchants and brokers along the waterways to the growing cities of Hangzhou, Suzhou, and Yangzhou, and beyond to the capitals at Luoyang and Chang'an (see, for example, Bray 1984: 597-615; Elvin 1973: 113-127; Lamouroux 1995; McDermott and Shiba 2015: 326-329, 385; Schafer 1967: 1-78). After the Tang Dynasty fell in 907, a succession of kingdoms and empires divided its territory between them. Erudite officials, powerful monks, and skilled craftsmen assisted the northern regimes in their ambition to recover the numinous authority of the Tang and helped southern rulers augment the commercial importance of their capitals with political power, religious patronage, and cultural refinement. To support their governments, their armies, and their patronage, these polities encouraged improvements in farming, created currencies, and built new roads and waterways, enlarging the broad tendencies of the preceding two centuries through directed local application (see, for example, Brose 2015; Clark 2009; Lorge 2011; Mostern 2011; Shields 2006; G. Wang 1963; H. Wang 2011). As the founding emperors of the Song Dynasty defeated their rivals below the rivers in the 960s and 970s, they acquired an empire more densely farmed, more intricately connected, more thoroughly monetized than the Tang Empire had been only 60 or 70 years earlier (see, for example, Hartwell 1967; Hartwell 1968; Hartwell 1971; Hartwell 1988; Lamouroux 1996; Lamouroux 2006; Mostern 2011: 144-159). Yet because the subjected regions retained their schools and printing houses, their monasteries and libraries, their market towns and merchant fleets, the founding emperors could not monopolize

cultural prestige as they monopolized political authority. For all its unrivalled splendour, the imperial capital at Kaifeng never gained the absolute cultural supremacy that Chang'an and Luoyang had possessed during the Tang.

As wealth and learning moved outward from the imperial centre to raise mansions, temples, and academies in regional cities, the commercial streetscape opened up to literary representation. Wang Anshi (王安石, 1021–1086) captures this double movement in an inscription for a pavilion erected by Shi Mao (施邁, fl. 1060–1078), Controller-General of Fuzhou prefecture (modern Fuzhou, Jiangxi province):

The present Emperor exerts himself in frugality. Some of the prospects of his ponds and preserves and his terraces and towers have been filled in or damaged without any effort to restore them. Such is His reluctance to cause disruption, and such is His yearning to pay homage to the intent with which the founding emperors cherished the people. For this reason the people can take advantage of their knowledge and strength to pursue profit and to satisfy their desires. Even southern and eastern barbarians who dwell by the lakes and seas and in the mountains and valleys, as well as the households of prosperous farmers, wealthy artisans, and powerful merchants, are frequently able to expand their residences and to raise high towers, and to compete in inexhaustible extravagance with the richest families of the commercial centres and the capital (*Wang Linchuan quanji*: 83.530).²

As eleventh-century literati raised the commercial streetscape to representation, they remarked for the first time on the particular beauty of dense habitation and urban activity, whose order and decoration complemented the natural surroundings. Ouyang Xiu (歐陽修, 1007–1072), for example, argues that the beauty of nature and the splendour of cities are equally worthy of admiration, but that only Hangzhou combines the beauty and pleasures of both:

Its customs are subtle, its residences splendid, and it presumably numbers over a hundred thousand households. Ringed by lakes and mountains, it displays continuous scenic beauty on all sides. And at the same time Fujianese merchants and overseas traders, wind-blown sails and ocean-going ships come and go on the endless waves of its rivers, amid dispersing clouds of smoke and fog: this is certainly splendid (*Ouyang Xiu quanji*: 40.585).

2 Wang Anshi attributes this speech to his host, Shi Mao.

Zeng Gong (曾鞏, 1019–1083) celebrates the active port and architectural beauty of Fuzhou (present Fuzhou, Fujian province), and praises Prefect Cheng Shimeng (程師孟, 1009–1086) for having

purchased a vertiginous ledge on Min Mountain and built a pavilion at that site. The scenic beauty of mountains and rivers, the spreading expanse of the city, and the splendid abundance of palaces and residences that its views afford, one can take in all around without leaving one's seat (*Zeng Gong ji*: 19.315).

Observed from such elevated pavilions, from city walls, towers, and pagodas, and from the streets and avenues, the city revealed itself as a living organism. When the city gates opened in the morning, carts and horses rushed into the streets like a flood, only to ebb away in the evening (see *Ouyang Xiu quanji*: 10.150; *Wang Jing Wengong shi*: 30.757–758; *Yuanxian ji*: 14.143). Pedestrians and carriages moved through the avenues like columns of ants, carrying away provisions from the markets to the residential areas (see *Gongshi ji*: 18.207; *Su Shunqin ji*: 3.26, 5.54). People, goods, and money circulated through the streets and along the waterways like vital essences through the human body (see *Zhang Fangping ji*: 14.178, and below). And the city wall enclosed this activity like a skin, protecting the bones and sinews of the life within (see *Wen Tong quanji*: 30.957). To the literati of the eleventh century, such perceptions afforded not merely amusing novelty, but philosophical instruction. Although the classical tradition had long denounced luxurious consumption and excessive profits, it had always allowed that merchants helped the multitudes ‘to exchange what they had for what they had not, and to dispose of their accumulated stores’ (*Shangshu*: 5.141a, as translated in Legge 1872: 78). As cities in the eleventh century grew to accommodate tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of households, it became obvious that urban life could not be sustained without extensive networks of merchants, brokers, artisans, and shopkeepers. Literati reasoned that, since commerce sustained life, it had to conform to the patterns of nature, as all that was enduringly sustaining of life and well-being must be rooted in nature. In writing the city, therefore, the literati of the eleventh century used natural imagery—the *liu* (流, ‘flow’) of traffic, the *tong* (通, ‘circulation’) of goods, the *hua* (華, ‘flourishing’) of commerce—not as pretty similes, but as ontological metaphors: as material evidence of the alignment of human activity with the natural order.

The effort to represent urban space in writing thus made up part of the more general attempt during the eleventh century to discover the universal

moral pattern in all things (see Bol 2015). Knowledge of this pattern had enabled the sage rulers of antiquity to arrange man in his proper place in nature, and to align human society with the cosmic order. As their successors over the centuries lost the perfect wisdom of these founders of civilization, learned men had recorded its traces as they persisted in historical documents, in ritual and song, and in the institutions of government. Spreading warfare, however, had diminished these belated records to fragments, and pragmatic rulers failed to reveal the moral nature of the people, even when they succeeded in establishing a temporary order. Although the classical texts of antiquity—the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing*, 詩經), the *Book of Changes* (*Yijing*, 易經), the *Book of Documents* (*Shangshu*, 尚書), the *Book of Ritual* (*Lijing*, 禮經), and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* (*Chunqiu*, 春秋)—had remained objects of dedicated study throughout the centuries, eleventh-century literati were convinced that they had achieved a closer understanding of the true meaning of these sacred texts than any generation since antiquity, and that the rulers and ministers of the Song Empire approached the verge of perfect governance for the first time since the fall of the Zhou Dynasty (c. 1045–256 BCE).

Song literati sought to recover the Way of the ancients through a dialectical inquiry into its disturbed traces and enduring manifestations. The multiplication of the classical canon through woodblock printing during the tenth and eleventh centuries, and the widespread study of this printed canon by candidates in the imperial examinations, caused classical scholars to pursue philology and exegesis with a new urgency. Some literati examined the shapes, patterns, and inscriptions of ritual vessels excavated from ancient tombs in hopes of correcting errors and supplementing omissions in the transmitted texts, and some reconstructed the clothing, objects, words, and buildings of ancient ritual so that they might gain insight into the moral Way through embodied performance (see de Pee 2007: 21–87). Because the heavens and the natural world always displayed the cosmic order, and because good government required practical knowledge, literati also dedicated themselves to the observation of nature. Eleventh-century *biji* (筆記, ‘notebooks’) and *wenji* (文集, ‘collected works’) contain observations about medicine, hydraulics, finance, astronomy, military strategy, carpentry, agriculture, and geology, including phenomena that the authors themselves cannot explain but offer to the attention of more knowledgeable readers. Funerary inscriptions of the 1030s and 1040s introduce a figure who represents the epistemological optimism of the age: the polymath official whose profound moral learning enables him to detect the talents of his peers and assess the character of his underlings, to resolve

litigation and arrest criminals, to advise farmers and build effective dykes, to control the price of goods and increase tax revenue without burdening the people. The achievements of such men confirmed that all observable phenomena were connected in a single intelligible pattern, and that the moral knowledge acquired through classical learning disposed the mind to grasp this pattern.

The pattern that eleventh-century literati tried to discern in the confusing, ordered movement of people, goods, and money through the streets and canals of the growing cities was this same moral, sustaining, cosmic pattern. If ships continued to arrive in time to provision the urban granaries, if shops and markets continued to offer sufficient produce to feed the population, if all residents found occupations that allowed them to maintain themselves and to provide for others, then cities must function like a sustainable irrigation system or a healthy human body, and officials must regulate the flow of goods and the circulation of money like hydraulic experts or able acupuncturists:

The Bian Canal, by Huang Shu (黃庶, fl. 1042–1072)

The capital at Bian rises like a mountain from the even plain,
The Song trusts its virtuous power as its metal gate and fiery moat.
The founding emperors in the beginning had profound intent,
To prevent their descendants from growing lazy or careless.

A myriad ships come north to feed the capital city,
Making the Bian River in effect its south-eastern throat.
And the million armoured soldiers are thus sustained,
The receptive intestine of the thousand-mile realm.
The people's hearts love and cherish this flowing water,
Which offers to them more than cloth and rice and grain.

In the capitals of the Han and Tang for many centuries,
Wheelbarrows could fill the imperial granaries till their contents rotted.
Ships profit the present a hundred times more than the past,
And yet one never sees in the storehouses a trace of mould.

If Heaven intends to remedy the transformation,
Why isn't there a man skillful in the use of needling stones?
From the hollows just remove the vermin of cash and grain,
And this river need not seek a man like Sang Hongyang (*Fa tan ji*: 1.13b-14a).

In this poem, Huang Shu pays tribute to the Bian Canal, the northern stretch of the Grand Canal, which every year brought ‘6,000,000 *dan*’ (c. 455,760,000 kilogrammes) of rice from the lower Yangzi region to the capital at Kaifeng (see, for example, *Ouyang Xiu quanji*: 32.477-8; *Songchao zhuchen zouyi*: 45.480; *Huangchao wenjian*: 56.844). The poem begins by comparing the rising gates and towers of Kaifeng to a mountain landscape, an image that suggests the subsequent treatment of the city as a natural entity, but that in the first instance contrasts Kaifeng with Chang’an and Luoyang, the capitals of the Han (206 BCE–220 CE) and Tang Empires. Whereas the latter capitals were shielded from attack by mountains, Kaifeng stood in a plain, unprotected by natural defences and therefore safeguarded only by the benevolent governance of the Song emperors, who dissuaded enemies through their transformative virtue, and by the presence of hundreds of thousands of troops, who discouraged enemies with their intimidating strength. The Bian Canal sustains this imperial governance by feeding the court, the government, the armies, and the urban population just as a throat delivers food to the stomach and the intestines. The third stanza explains that Kaifeng, although at first impression artificial and precarious, is in fact a healthier organism than Chang’an and Luoyang were under the Han and Tang Dynasties. The Song government had secured more efficient and more copious transport to the capital than its predecessors had, and yet it did not allow any of its abundant provisions to go to waste. The metropolitan capital is therefore in essence a robust organism, its healthy circulation of money and goods afflicted only by the dissipation of petty theft and marginal corruption. If financial experts could eliminate these minor irritations through local action, they would amplify the natural flow of the economy without resorting to the complicated, dangerous interventions of men like Sang Hongyang (桑弘羊, 150–80 BCE).³ A minister to Emperor Wu (r. 140–87 BCE) of the Han Dynasty, Sang Hongyang had helped devise the taxes and monopolies that stocked the capital storehouses with rotting grain (see *Hanshu*: 24a.1135-36, 24b.1164-75; *Shiji*: 30.2b-3b, 30.19a-20a; Chin 2014: 48-66). Huang Shu in this poem probably criticizes the ambitious programme of reforms instituted by Wang Anshi. Known as the New Laws, these radical reforms sought to increase government revenue by replacing

3 The ‘man skilled at using needling stones’ is probably a reference to the legendary Warring States physician Bian Que (扁鵲), whose use of stone lancets to drain excess *yin* and *yang* (陰陽) and move *qi* (氣) is invoked as a metaphor for sound economic policy in the *Debates on Salt and Iron* (*Yantie lun*, 鹽鐵論, first century BCE). See *Yantie lun*: XIV.16. On the use of needling stones as a local intervention, see Lo 2002. I thank Michael Stanley-Baker for this reference.

merchant houses with government agencies, thereby placing a larger share of the economy under the control of the government and assimilating the profit margin of merchants as public income.

It was in fact the debates about these reforms that destroyed the hopes of an imminent restoration of antiquity and discouraged efforts to write the city. Over the course of the eleventh century, the standing armies that protected the capital and defended the border against the perceived threat of the Liao (947–1125) and Xia (1038–1227) Empires had grown to such proportions that the salaries and supplies for the troops consumed up to 82 percent of the government budget. The frequent deficits that resulted from these mounting expenses were redeemed only by occasional donations from the emperor's Privy Purse (see Golas 1986: 5–11; Golas 2015: 148–155; Hartwell 1988: 53–59; Lamouroux 2006; Lamouroux 2007). Over the decades, a number of Grand Councillors proposed reforms to eliminate these structural deficits. Although some emphasized the need to reduce expenses and others concentrated their efforts on increasing revenues, all agreed that the Song Empire possessed resources in unprecedented abundance, and that the deficits resulted from the misuse of those resources, not from their inadequacy. In 1069, Emperor Shenzong (神宗, r. 1067–1085) appointed Wang Anshi to undertake the most ambitious, most radical, most comprehensive reforms to date. Wang designed his reforms to place resources in the hands of those who needed them by the means most profitable (or least costly) to the government: agricultural loans made by the government rather than by usurious lenders, the collection of surplus grain in local storehouses rather than the distribution of famine relief from distant locations, levies to pay soldiers for carrying out efficient construction projects rather than reliance on less capable and less reliable *corvée* labourers, direct trade of Sichuanese tea for Tibetan horses rather than the purchase of horses with monopoly revenues collected from tea merchants, transport and sale of monopoly goods by government brokers rather than by licenced merchants, and so forth (see, for example, Golas 2015: 150–155, 170–171, 178–179; Hartwell 1988: 65–72; Kuhn 2009: 55–59; Liu 1959: 40–58, 98–113; Smith 1991; Smith 2009). Opponents of the New Laws objected that the reforms increased inefficiency and revenue loss instead of diminishing them, as the hegemonic monopolies of the new government agencies encouraged corruption, abuse of power, unreasonable levies, and arbitrary prices. They agreed with Wang that the workings of market forces always involved a loss of resources—the profits taken by merchants and the labour wasted on luxuries—but they argued that the profit incentive made merchants more efficient, and more willing to take risks, than the

new government agencies, and that the profits earned by merchants cost the government less in revenue than did the maintenance of Wang Anshi's new fiscal bureaucracy (see, for example, *Luancheng ji*: I.35.760-765, I.35.771-776, I.36.785-790, I.37.822, II.12.1282-1283, III.8.1554-1555; cf. Lamouroux 2002: 196-207).

The disagreement proved impossible to arbitrate. Wang Anshi argued that his reforms required time to take effect; his opponents warned that the reforms should be abolished before they caused irreparable damage. The varied conditions of the expansive empire afforded evidence for every conviction, and each side accused the other of fabricating its numbers and facts (see *Fan Zhongxuan ji*: *zouyi*.2.16b-17b; *Xitai ji*: 6.4a-5a). Both sides, moreover, cited the same canonical texts to prove their case, but neither faction proved capable of demonstrating to the other that its interpretation of the sacred authorities was correct. Natural analogies could not resolve these exegetical disagreements. When the Yellow River changed course in 1079, both sides claimed the event as an object lesson in economic policy. Although the arguments of the reformers survive only in summaries by their opponents, they appear to have argued that the government should take advantage of this latest southern shift of the river to return it to its original eastern course, which it ran before taking a northern route through Hebei in 1049 (see Zhang 2016: 144-187). Their opponents argued that the powerful river would overwhelm whatever obstacles were put in the way of its natural fall, and that the government should spend its resources on accommodating the new course of the river rather than creating another series of disasters in efforts to change it (see, for example, *Fan Zhongxuan ji*: 15.11a; *Lugong wenji*: 23.1a-24.2b; *Luancheng ji*: I.45.996-998, II.12.1284-1295, II.23.1428-1429; *Su Shi wenji*: 29.823-826.). The reformers, in other words, believed that the government should use its unprecedented knowledge and technology to make active, large-scale interventions, in the natural environment as in economic activity. Their opponents objected that such interventions would be both ineffective and wasteful, and that the government should instead allow the river and the market to run their course, limiting its policies to the restraint or encouragement of natural tendencies. Meanwhile, neither the reformers nor their opponents had succeeded in restoring the perfect governance of the ancients.

Philip Mirowski has argued that the search by nineteenth-century physicists for 'the single formula that described the entire world' led to the diversification and fissure of physics 'as it was poised upon the very brink of the unification of all physical knowledge', because the conviction

of fundamental unity drew attention to all phenomena and calculations that defied it (Mirowski 1989: 28, 88). The search by eleventh-century literati for a universal moral pattern likewise required that all canonical texts, all knowledge, all human endeavour be made to agree in one dynamic, harmonious configuration. But the exegetical methods on which literati relied for access to the highest truth proved incapable of revealing this pattern, and proved inadequate even to establish beyond doubt the superiority of one interpretation over another. When the literati found that the principles of exegesis could not resolve material questions of policy, and when they discovered that the wealth and power of the Song could not overcome the armies of the Jin Empire (1114–1234), they divorced moral philosophy from economic policy, and separated the writing of the city from the care of the self. Those who sought the pattern in all things determined to seek it in themselves and in the harmonious governance of their family and their community, where errors would be easier to correct and enlightenment would be immediately sensible. They moved away from the city, which they now equated with false appearances and immoral ambitions:

West Village, by Lü Nangong (呂南公, 1047–1086)

East Village is certainly beautiful,
 South Village is naturally quiet.
 North Village is also suitable,
 Its customs bold, hard to reject.

But in this nook of the jagged mountains,
 A stream meanders down the slope.
 It has bright gardens for hemp and mulberry,
 It has green furrows for ploughing and sowing.

The clouded peak three miles away,
 Rewards those who look up to seek it out.
 Since here is no clamour of carts and horses,
 Who would worry about fame or profit?

Oh! My enlightened ancestors,
 The old homestead needs repairs.
 I return to raise the eaves and columns,
 A resolution I shall not renege.

I create three paths in different directions,
 I connect four ditches in the forecourt.
 On a veranda I arrange my books and zither,
 In a shed I store my hoe and harrow.

[...]

I laid my plans already long ago,
 My body has abundant strength.
 How could I equal the sage with the weeding basket?
 That does not meet my intention (*Guan yuan ji*: 3.17ab).⁴

In their voluntary retirement, many of these men followed the central injunctions in 'The Great Learning' (*Daxue*, 大學), a chapter of the *Record of Ritual* (*Liji*, 禮記), to pursue a life of self-cultivation that bears a close resemblance to the labour of 'taking care of oneself' (*epimeleia seatou*, ἐπιμέλεια σεαυτοῦ) examined by Michel Foucault in *The Care of the Self* (see Foucault 1988: 43-54 for further discussion of this concept):

The ancients who wished to illustrate illustrious virtue throughout the kingdom, first ordered well their own States. Wishing to order well their States, they first regulated their families. Wishing to regulate their families, they first cultivated their persons. Wishing to cultivate their persons, they first rectified their hearts. Wishing to rectify their hearts, they first sought to be sincere in their thoughts. Wishing to be sincere in their thoughts, they first extended to the utmost their knowledge. Such extension of knowledge lay in the investigation of things. Things being investigated, knowledge became complete. Their knowledge being complete, their thoughts were sincere. Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified. Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their States were rightly governed. Their States being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy (*Liji*: 60.1673a, as translated in Legge 1933: 357-359).

4 'The sage with the weeding basket' refers to an episode in *The Analects* (*Lunyu*, 論語) via an allusion to a poem by Tao Qian (陶潛, 365-427). In the episode, Kongzi's disciple Zilu meets an old man who is carrying a weeding basket on a shoulder pole. The man chastises Zilu for his misguided priorities. When Zilu tells Kongzi about the encounter, Kongzi concludes that the man must have been a hermit sage. See *Lunyu*: XVIII.7; *Tao Yuanming ji*: 3.7b-8a. For other examples of Lü Nangong's dismissal of the city as a site of vain ambitions, see *Guan yuan ji*: 1.1b, 1.2a, 1.12a, 4.10a-11a.

Those who continued the effort to represent the city in writing—such as the authors of *Record of a Dream of Splendour in the Eastern Capital* (*Dongjing meng Hua lu*, 東京夢華錄, 1148), *The Splendid Scenery of the Capital* (*Ducheng jisheng*, 都城紀勝, 1235), *Record of Luxuriant Scenery by the Old Man of West Lake* (*Xihu laoren fanshenglu*, 西湖老人繁盛錄, c.1240s), and *Former Matters of Wulin* (*Wulin jiushi*, 武林舊事, c. 1280)—also divorced the city from moral cultivation and from a self-sustaining cosmic harmony. Although they present the florescence of the capital cities as the natural issue of imperial virtue, and although they use some of the literary tropes devised by authors of the eleventh century (such as the naturalization of the city by following its characteristic activities from dawn to sunset), their delight in conspicuous display and competitive consumption contradicts imperial law and classicist morality.

The city hierarchical

This separation of the city from moral learning during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries serves as a reminder of the ideological project of the writing of the city in the texts that survive from the eleventh century. In these texts, the city emerges into writing as part of an endeavour to discover a timeless, moral pattern in the chaotic movement of people, goods, and money through markets and alleyways. That such a pattern informed all urban activity, and indeed all sustaining and sustainable economic activity, could not be doubted. Literati of the eleventh century contemplated the city and the economy in the firm conviction that any lasting order had to be based on the same moral pattern that the ancients had discerned in the heavens and in their natural surroundings, and that they had laid down in ritual and moral injunctions. This made the writing of the city an ideological project, not only because it subjected economic activity to moral judgment, but also because it insisted that moral learning, not wealth, should be the basis for political authority and cultural prestige. Distinctions between moral and immoral wealth, between justified and unjustified profits, between necessary and unnecessary possessions, served a coherent analytical function in literati discourses on the moral economy, but they also served to condemn the power and prestige attached to commercial wealth and sumptuous display. Literati in the eleventh century achieved many subtle insights into the workings of money and value (see, for example, Golas 1986: 34; Hartwell 1968: 76-78; Oberst 1996: 490; Lamouroux 2003: 99-103), but their analyses were limited by the determination to assimilate economic analysis to moral learning.

One should be careful, however, not to equate this moral approach to the economy with a general 'Chinese' attitude toward commerce and the city, or even to assume that it represents in their fullness the thoughts and actions of 'Confucian' literati. First, posterity has not preserved the ledgers of merchants, the diaries of brokers, the letters of wholesalers, or the inventories of craftsmen. Even the arguments that wealthy commoners and imperial kinsmen may have offered to justify their conspicuous consumption do not survive, preserving their glittering mansions and golden cups only as negative signs in denunciations by imperial officials. Archaeologists have excavated archival collections from pits and tombs of the Shang (c. 1600–c.1045 BCE) and Han Dynasties, and historians of the Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1636–1912) Dynasties have access to archives that survived the final centuries of imperial rule and the wars of the Republican period (1912–1949). Historians of the Song Empire, however, must rely on documents transmitted through library collections, most of them printed, and most of them preserved for their literary merit or their moral justness.

Second, the literati of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries copied and reprinted the writings of the men whom they regarded as their literary and moral examples and neglected the works of men they condemned. This has resulted, for example, in the near obliteration of the writings by the supporters of Wang Anshi's reforms (see Bol 2015: 711–712; Hartman 1998; Hartman 2006; Hartman 2015: 25). The collected works of Wang Anshi himself were preserved as evidence of his exemplary learning, but much of the debate about his policies and their implementation is known only through summaries by his opponents. In his inscription for the pavilion raised by the Controller-General of Fuzhou, above, Wang Anshi appears to encourage the profit and profligacy that the emperor's frugality has enabled among the people—a promotion of economic growth that Wang's opponents would have denounced as immoral and detrimental—and it is well possible that those who supported Wang Anshi's reforms during the 1070s and 1080s, and again during their reinstatement under Emperor Huizong (徽宗, r. 1100–1125), continued to be interested in the city as a manifestation of a natural pattern, or as a measure of economic health.

Third, the extant writings of eleventh-century literati rarely mention the source of their wealth. One may wonder, for example, how Lü Nangong could afford to renounce the examinations and retire to West Village in his thirties. He laments the precarious existence of the farmers in his village, but he evidently does not share it (see, for example, *Guan yuan ji*: 1.8a, 3.1ab, 3.5b–6a, 4.14ab, 4.15b). The extant writings of eleventh-century literati, in other words, not only fail to represent the variety of economic ideas held

by merchants, brokers, craftsmen, pensioners, and the proponents of Wang Anshi's New Laws, but they also exclude the vernacular understanding of money and property by which they themselves maintained their families and liberated their sons for long years of study (see Lamouroux 2002: 183-184). The conventional representation of the social hierarchy—scholars, farmers, artisans, merchants—obscures the fact that many scholarly families turned their less talented sons to commerce, and that merchants had a better chance of attaining to the ranks of scholars than did artisans or farmers.

Finally, the partiality of extant discourses on the economy is evident from the florescence of cities and commerce during the Song Dynasty. Cities of tens of thousands and hundreds of thousands of residents thrived and grew, despite the considerable challenge of supplying sufficient food and managing waste. Those who doubt the commercial acumen of 'Chinese' merchants and 'Confucian' literati would do well to remember that the Song built the cities, the waterways, the bridges, and the ships that astonished the Venetian Marco Polo in the late thirteenth century:

And when one has gone three days, then one finds the very, very noble city called Quinsai [i.e., Hangzhou], which in French means the 'City of Heaven'. Since we have come there, we will recount all its great nobility to you, for it is good to tell: for this is without a doubt the best and the noblest city in the world. (Polo 2016: 133)

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9. The Value and Meaning of Temporality and its Relationship to Identity in Kunming City, China

Yun Gao and Nicholas Temple

Abstract

This chapter highlights the changing relationships between the city and its modes of representation through an examination of the historical transformations of Kunming, a city on the southwest border of China. Our intention is to introduce particular characteristics of urban space in Kunming as the basis for a more detailed examination of the historical differences between Western and Chinese perspectives of temporality in building, which will be explored in a forthcoming book, and how these differences are manifested in the changing social contexts of the city. This chapter demonstrates that changes in the territorialized districts of the traditional city of Kunming since the Qing Dynasty (1644-1912) constitute a movement towards modernization. Moreover, this development has given rise to a distinctive type of mercantile space within the city centre, with increasing importance attached to the commercial street. Importantly, this feature of the urban topography of Kunming can be seen as closely related to the surrounding mountains and lakes, both within and outside the old city boundaries that have served as primary reference points for Kunming's urban planning. The study seeks to establish whether the traditional meanings of temporality in building, as manifested within the particular urban grain of Kunming, still inform contemporary urban and architectural practice, given that such relationships are often concealed beneath the homogeneous image of the temporal city.

Keywords: Kunming, urban change, traditional street, temporality, modernization

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Introduction

Alexander Nagel and Christopher Wood have explored the different relationships between time and buildings in China and the West, stating:

These were buildings [...] that disguised their own histories of fabrication and subsequent restorations. The Forbidden City transcended the merely human circumstances of its life in time. In the European tradition of building and making to which Beauvoir was implicitly comparing the Chinese palace, an artifact's historicity is both the source of its authority and the basis for an eventual demystification of that authority. In the modern West, the very old building or painting is venerated for having survived and for testifying with its body to the corrosive effects of the passage of time (Nagel and Wood 2010: 7).

The apparent contrast of the different relationships between time and buildings in China and the West, in the value and meaning attached to temporal change in the Chinese and European traditions of building and restoration, provides only a glimpse of a much more complex relationship between the city and individuals in both the past and the contemporary globalized world.

The Forbidden Palace and many other Chinese imperial palaces represent a remarkably unified order of power and virtue as defined by traditional Chinese philosophies dating back to the Zhanguo Period (500-221 BCE).¹ For example, the ideal layout of the 'Palace City', recorded in *Kaogon Ji*, *Zhou Li*, *Jiangren* and written in Zhanguo period, was based on a hierarchy of different social groups. More significantly the palace was represented as the centre (cosmic pivot) of microcosm of the earth (Wright 1977: 47). Xu suggested that there was a 'cosmological gulf' between China and the West (Xu 2000: 49). As Mote discussed (1971) about the cosmology of the Chinese city that for the Chinese, there was no creator or external cause for creating the world or humans as those in the West:

The genuine Chinese cosmogony is that of organismic process, meaning that all of the parts of the entire cosmos belong to one organic whole and

¹ The ideal layout of the city is summarized in the 'Kaogon ji', wrote in the mid-tenth century. Kaogon Ji, in *Zhou Li, juan* 41. Translated by Wheatley (1971: 411). The ideal layout of the city represents more significantly as a microcosm and the very centre of the earth than as the old well field system of land settlement and cultivation.

that they all interact as participants in one spontaneously self-generating life process (Mote 1971: 17–18).

Therefore, Xu suggested that “for the Chinese, the discovery or projection of a fixed point was equivalent not to the creation of the world but to the *finding* of the world” (Xu 2000: 49). The capital city, where the emperor resided, linked Heaven and Earth. A proper siting of the palace was regarded as responsible for aligning the human realm with the moral patterns of the cosmos (Xu 2000: 32–49). The highest achievement of this palace building complex, as often discussed in Chinese academic studies, is the symbolic unity between Heavenly and Human realms expressed through the architecture. Xu explained this in four categories: ‘choice and preparation of the site, cardinal orientation, city layout, and disposition of principal structures’ (Xu 2000: 29–55). The ideal spatial setting of the imperial palace, that represented the crucial link between the individual’s sense of communion with nature and Heaven, could raise people’s self-understanding in their relation to the heavenly realm. As Tu Weiming explained about Mencius’s Confucian way:

Mencius asserted that if we fully realize the potential within our hearts, we will understand our nature; and by understanding our nature we will know Heaven. This profound faith in the human capacity for self-knowledge and for understanding Heaven by tapping spiritual resources from within (Tu 1990: 118).

Over time, such unity transcended the lifetime of the physical artefacts of buildings, revealing in the process something eternal through their perpetuity. Using Kunming city as an example, we explore in this chapter how the protection, preservation, and inheritance of traditions, as represented by classical Chinese buildings, adhered to these ideologies and spiritual associations until the beginning of the twentieth century, only to be subjected to the overall urban restructuring of the expanded modern city and its gradual modification building ornamentation during the later-part of the century. We argue that in this process the craftsmanship of architectural elements that traditionally indicated different ‘temporal’ stages was redeployed in modern design as a means of re-authenticating buildings as legitimate heritage artefacts. Our investigations seek to determine whether the ‘deep’ tradition of value and meaning of temporality in building, and its relationship to cultural identity, still informs the contemporary city in China, with specific reference to Kunming.

Situated on a frontier, Kunming was always influenced by external culture and traditions, not only from Southeast Asian countries and traders/merchants from other regions in China, but also, more recently, from the influences arising from the retreat of universities and factories from other Chinese cities to Kunming during the war with Japan. In many ways, the spaces of Kunming were transformed to reflect these changing relationships between practices, power, and ritual. The unique importance attached to the streets in Kunming and the penetration of commercial areas into the city centre, where government offices were traditionally situated, represented decisive changes in the symbolic meanings of the city; albeit still traceable to an older tradition.

History of Yunnan and Kunming—city and commercial business

Compared to the central plains of China, Yunnan has served as a peripheral and remote frontier for centuries. Throughout history, it has had close links to Southeast Asia, with the same ethnic groups living in both Yunnan and the adjacent countries. Due to the geographic complexity of the Himalayan mountain ranges and the large rivers in the region, the indigenous peoples scattered in these remote areas have historically been portrayed in historical records as 'barbarian and exotic' (Yang 2009: 243). Many Chinese historical writings describe Yunnan as an attractive but dangerous land (Guo 2008: 19-62). However, recent historical research of this part of China has taken a rather different view. For example, there has been new interest in the influence from central China before the nineteenth century as well as Yunnan's historical links with Southeast Asian countries (Giersch 2006). The geographical location of this province is also seen as strategically important by the current central government, which considers it a politically and socially important bridge to southwest countries such as Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Thailand (Su 2013; Xie et al. 2009).

Kunming as a settlement was first established in 280 BCE, when a senior general of the Chu Kingdom named Zhuang Qiao led his troops into the region. There they 'built the city wall and moat and founded a state' (Xie et al. 2009). This city was called Julan City (且蘭城). Before the Tang Dynasty (618–907 CE), Kunming was a small settlement on the south of Dian lake. By 764 CE it had developed into a larger city called Toudong City (拓東城), which was part of the Nanzhao Kingdom (南詔國, 738–937 CE) that unified Yunnan and controlled parts of today's Guizhou and Sichuan Provinces, and

Vietnam and Myanmar. According to the historical book *Man Shu* (蠻書),² Kunming was the second capital of Nanzhao, and was a 'large city with famous business establishments, and many crafts and commercial entities' (Xie et al. 2009). However, it was not until the Yuan Dynasty (1271–1368), when the imperial court established Yunnan province as an administrative centre, that the Vice-chief-minister of the Yuan Dynasty commissioned a major engineering project to control the flooding of Dian Lake. Kunming city consequently became the food storage, political, economic, and cultural centre of the province.

When the Yuan Dynasty was first established, the new central imperial court adopted a military stance towards the southwest region (the so-called 'barbarian' areas). As a result, a number of large rebellions emerged between 1264 and 1273. The conflicts that resulted prompted the Yuan central government to change its policies to promote the rule of virtue in the attempt to culturally assimilate the region. One of the methods was to promote Confucius among all levels of citizenship in Yunnan in order to reform the 'barbarians' into 'civilized' people. In 1274, a Yuan administrator sent from the imperial court, Sai Dian Chi (賽典赤), was appointed the governor of Yunnan. His first strategy was to build a Confucian temple in Kunming and to teach Confucian philosophy to the local people so that they would understand 'the rule of virtue'. Previously, the local traditions concerning the social order or hierarchy and the rituals of daily life had been very different from those in central China. From the Yuan Dynasty onwards, Confucian principles were vigorously pursued by the city's administrators. Building Confucian temples in Yunnan was part of the central strategy for ruling the region. Confucian teachers were recruited from Shanxi and Sichuan provinces: 'For Confucius the primary function of education is to provide the proper way of training noblemen, a process that involves constant self-improvement and continuous social interaction' (Tu 1990: 114). Confucius defined humanity as 'conquer[ing] yourself and return[ing] to ritual' (克己復禮),³ hence the interplay between inner spiritual self-transformation and outward social participation. Consequently, Confucian traditions, which cultivated virtuous government, social cohesion and individual well-being, served a central role in the development of Yunnan and its commercial life. By the Ming

2 *Man Shu* was written by Fan Chuo during the Tang Dynasty. It includes ten books in a series about various aspects of life in Yunnan province. The documents record data about roads, mountains, and rivers; political regions; cities and towns; products; local habits; army; and the countries surrounding the province.

3 The *Analects* 12.1. For more discussion, see Kieschnick 1992.

Dynasty (1368–1644), Confucian education was thriving in Yunnan, where 59 temples were built during the Ming Dynasty, and seventeen more during the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912).

Because of the huge differences between the culture and societies of Yunnan and those of central China, Sai Dian Chi's strategy for ruling Yunnan was to follow Confucius' saying of 'harmony but not sameness' (和而不同),⁴ thereby allowing the local people to follow their own customs while also introducing the new Confucian ideology and education. Unlike the imperial palaces where the spatial arrangements followed the order defined by Confucian ideology, that also adhered to a strict Chinese standard of the city form, the layout of Kunming city gradually followed the topology and topography of the natural landscape.

Ritual and commercial space in relation to the natural environment

As a political, economic, and cultural centre of the province during the Yuan Dynasty, Kunming was described by the scholar Wang Sheng (王昇) in a long descriptive poem about Dian Lake (*Dian Chi Fu*—滇池賦):

Green Rooster Mountain is precipitous and dangerous
 Golden Horse Mountain is meandering and exquisite
 Ruan Mountain is towering and green
 Shang Mountain is hidden and gathering under the sky
 Wuhua [hill] gathered all the excellence of world's creations
 Sanshi [three markets] is the most prosperous among those
 Two towers [West and East temple pagodas] sustain the sky
 One bridge [Yunjin bridge] like the rainbow crossing the sun path
 Thousands of ships, like countless ants, gather around the Yunjin bridge
 Tens of thousands of boats moor outside the city walls
 Bringing hundreds of commodities from land and sea
 Making people in Kunming rich
 The grace and kindness of the Yuan Dynasty extended
 Far into the frontier lands in all four directions
 Even with the remote areas in Yunnan
 Being ruled long by the emperor, has been busy on sending the tributary
 With rhinoceros and elephants keep going
 As the rivers all going into the sea day and night (Xie 2009: 47-48).

4 The *Analects* 13.23. For further details, see Li 2015.

In *Dian Chi Fu*, Wang links the appreciation of the natural landscape that surrounded Kunming with the locations of administrative offices, markets, and monasteries in the city, expressing how the hustle and bustle of the mercantile communities—their mechanical and commercial activities—intertwine with the natural order, rather than being in opposition to it. The visual connections between the backdrop of mountains and sky and the topographical locations of the marketplace and its mechanisms of trade and commercial transactions bind both natural environment and built environment with the eternal temporality of the world and virtues defined through Confucian ideology. As an example, in the *Analects*, Confucius also associates virtues with mountains and water: ‘The wise delight in water; the benevolent delight in mountains. The wise know ways of moving through; the benevolent know leisurely calm and tranquillity; the wise enjoy cheerfulness; the benevolent enjoy long life’ (*Analects* 6.26).⁵

When the Italian explorer Marco Polo arrived in Kunming, around the same time this poem was written, he wrote that Kunming was a ‘magnificent big city’ (Polo 1936). There were businessmen and artisans. Different groups lived together, including idolaters, Nestorian Christians, and Muslims. But the idolaters were the most numerous. The locals produced plenty of rice and wheat, but as they thought it was not hygienic to make bread from wheat, they ate rice. They also added spices to crops to make alcohol. The currency used was seashells, which could also be used as hair decorations. There were many salt wells in the city, where salt was extracted for local use. The tax on salt was a large source of income for the Great Khan (Polo 1936). Polo didn’t mention any ritual ceremonies held in the city which were an important influence in defining the forms of urban space. Nevertheless, his experiences of the old city demonstrate that Kunming was a vibrant and culturally diverse commercial centre.

This atmosphere however of a busy, but also somewhat disordered and chaotic city illustrated by Polo changed during the Ming Dynasty, when Kunming acquired the appearance of a more ordered city as appropriate for its growing political power and ritual/ceremonial significance.

5 The *Analects* 6.23: 知者樂水，仁者樂山。知者動，仁者靜。知者樂，仁者壽 (translated by the author).

Form of the political and ritual space in the Ming Dynasty

In 1381 Ming armies conquered Yunnan and changed the name of the city from Zhongqing Chen (中慶城) to Yunnan Fu (雲南府). Yunnan included four prefectures and nine counties in its administration region. Kunming was one of the counties. This was the period when burnt bricks started to be used as a building material and for city walls, unlike the mud bricks that had been used earlier. The Ming administration built high walls and storages for food collected within a wide region. Kunming was expanding, and a new brick city wall was erected 500 metres north of the previous one to enclose the expanded city. This expansion not only aimed to avoid flooding from the lake outside the city walls, but also enabled the walled city to encompass three hills (Yuanton, Wuhua, and Zubian), and the Green lake within the walled area in response to considerations of *feng shui* (風水, 'geomancy'). The Chinese map of the city at this time demonstrated both monumentality and spirituality, in which the symbolic/ritual relationships between *feng shui* and the city found visual expression in the city plan which was formed in the shape of a tortoise. In China, the tortoise is regarded as an auspicious animal, symbolising longevity. The new city wall separated the offices, temples, and schools within the walls from the common residents who lived outside the walls.

According to Liu Xue (Liu 2003), who quotes from the Yunnan historical records by Dai (1901), the Ming Dynasty-era master geomancer Wang Zhanhai designed Kunming city in a tortoise shape within the setting of the surrounding mountains and lake. His design concept referenced Long Dragon Mountain, to the north of the city, which extended from the adjacent Sichuan province, which in turn is connected to the Yuanton hill inside the city, where it divides into five 'branches' of clusters of smaller hills. The 'Yang' branch ends in the Wuhua Hill where the Confucius temple was built (Liu 2003: 32-35). The head of the mountain range then points toward the west, as if to intertwine with the head of the tortoise that forms from the shape of the city.⁶ This Chinese map contrasts sharply with the later map drawn by Jean-Baptiste du Halde and published in the eighteenth century in *Description de la Chine* (Du Halde 1736), which focused on the geometric shape of the city within the larger geographic context.

The old city of Kunming contained six gates along the city walls that were symmetrically placed east to west, whilst on the north and south sides the gates were both in the middle of the walls. The north-south axis in the city was marked by four archways built along the axis.

6 This plan of the city is shown in Dai 1901: 15.

Figure 9.1 Map of Kunming (after Jean-Baptiste du Halde, 1736)

Source: authors' drawing

The area within the wall was mostly occupied by the offices of the ruling governors, the houses of wealthy citizens, monasteries, schools, and an examination hall managed by the gate-keepers of the elite civil service. Some houses and gardens for officers and wealthy people were located outside the city wall in the surrounding suburbs. Indeed, the bulk of the residents of the city lived outside the walls, many gathered in the suburban districts on the south side. Importantly, there are no streets marked on the historic maps of Kunming shown. However, the central Nanguan Street serves as the principal ceremonial axis of the city. According to documents in the Qing Dynasty, the length of this street was divided into three zones: the left side was used exclusively by pedestrian officers; the right side was earmarked for businessmen; and the privileged route along the middle was reserved for aristocrats. The city was zoned according to each area's relationship with the hills and with Green Lake (Xie et al. 2009). This indicates that the city was treated as an interconnected network of physical spaces and their ritual/ceremonial passageways and precincts.

City without streets

The Ming-Dynasty map of Kunming clearly emphasizes the location of the hills in the city, the territorial demarcations of the different districts—marked out by dotted lines—together with the names of important buildings. With the different urban quarters and prominent buildings represented as integral parts of the urbanscape, it is clear that the city was effectively shaped by the territorial divisions of the districts rather than by street patterns. Moreover, these maps demonstrate the importance attached to Wuhua Hill, which aligned with the middle axis of the city and connected to the important waterway of Dian Lake. In essence, the layout of Kunming was arranged according to the hill and lake inside the city enclosure and the mountains and lake outside the city walls, collectively providing a distinctive spatial and topographical grammar of political power and a virtuous/noble life.

The unmarked streets of Kunming were simply narrow lanes. No numbers were assigned to the houses along these streets; instead, buildings were identified by their names or their locations in relation to the archways and the districts (Xie et al. 2009). Another character of the spatial arrangement was that there was no visual evidence of public spaces in these maps, as is typical of commemorative maps of European cities, such as Rome, from the early modern period.

A document dating to the Qing Dynasty mentions that four districts inside the city walls were mainly for government offices, examination halls, monasteries, and educational schools, as well as providing accommodation for people coming from other provinces to trade. Other residences, workshops, and markets for commoners located outside the city walls. There were a total of eighteen residential and marketing areas outside the city walls of Kunming (Liu 2003: 22). This complex array of commercial, civic, and religious buildings on the periphery of Kunming had a similar relationship that is redolent of what Nicholas Temple observed about ancient Western cities, namely that the ‘market place actual gave sustenance to participatory (civic/religious) involvement rather than undermining it’ (Temple 2018).

The view from the top of Wuhua Hill toward Dian Lake and West Mountain, which was formed in the shape of a ‘sleeping beauty’ by West Mountain according to popular folklore, was the most important *jing* (景, roughly translated as ‘scene’, but more accurately describing the interactive unity between scenic views and the spectator (Zou 2008) that effectively embodied the whole city. As Zou suggests in regard to the *jing*: ‘The existence of *jing* cannot be categorized as either an object (for example, materiality of buildings) or a subject (political ideologies) based on Western metaphysics,

rather it presents itself as a primordial vision, or sense, that is inscribed in emotion and intention'. *Jing* therefore renders the vision of nature and scenery as *embodied* in the self: a reflexive relationship between viewer and viewed (Zou 2008: 362). To keep the views from some sites in the city to the surrounding mountains was one of the most important principles for urban space planning for Kunming City. The 'Long Couplet on Daguean Pavilion', an inscription on columns of Daguean Pavilion in Kunming, by Sun Ranweng (孙髯翁), a celebrity of Kunming during the Qianlong Period of the Qing Dynasty (1711–1799), describes the city in relation to the surrounding natural landscape—a poetic account that in many ways transcends the reality of the city. Describing the *jing* and expressing personal emotions, the author looks back at how the city emerged along a vein of the natural landscape among the mountains and the lake. Military and political events shaped Kunming city during the Han, Tang, Song, and Yuan Dynasties. After listing the heroes from Yunnan's history, Sun Ranweng then states the following:

Extraordinary historical deeds achieved with efforts that could move mountains were merely a temporary state and ephemeral stage that could disappear with the changes occurring between dynasties. The beautiful bead curtains in the painted mansions could not last as long as the rain at night or the cloud at dawn. Only the broken stone tablets that recorded the stellar performances are left in the sunset and evening mist. What one can experience now are the occasional sounds of temple bells, lights from the fishing boats that illuminate half of the river, two lines of lonely geese in the sky, and the cold frost left on bed pillows in the morning.

The couplet expresses no particular joy or sorrow, instead conveying personal feelings about the history of the city and its cosmic significance, finally focusing on the relics of the broken stone tablets, the occasional sound of a bell, and the sight of small fishing boats in the middle of the lake that merge with the natural landscape. Finally, both natural and built environment in the picture gained in the process an extended life in the cyclic rhythms of Chinese time.

The map drawn by the Joseph Beauvais, a Frenchman who was stationed in Kunming in 1901, expresses a rather different way of understanding the city. Using the Western technique of the 'method of lines', this map of Kunming is drawn with the clear intention of representing the street patterns. Hence, the representation of Kunming through the ages has borne witness to the influence of very different cultural outlooks. When applied to traditional Chinese cities, modern western techniques of cartography, that served essentially as abstracted and scaled registers of urban space,

obscured much of the underlying symbolism of the topographical contexts and orientational alignments of urban arrangements as demonstrated in this example.

The influence from Southeast Asian countries in the nineteenth century extended their influence north into the adjacent Yunnan province. During the 1870s, Yunnan opened four counties along its borders to neighbouring countries as foreign trading outposts. As a result of these international trading links, imported goods and local industries led to the transformation of the urban forms of Kunming and changed the structure of commercial markets across Yunnan province. A government-run business bureau was then established in 1883, and in 1905, with the fast pace of modernization, the Kunming governor applied to the imperial court for permission to open the city as a commercial port for overseas trade. The government gave permission to open an area in the southeast of Kunming, encircled by a perimeter boundary of six kilometres, that was specifically for rental to foreign businesses (Xie et al. 2009). With investment from French companies as part of a plan to extend their commercial influence in the region, the Yunnan-Vietnam railway started running in 1910. This was the first railway built in western China. Due to the construction of the new railway system, the formerly isolated Yunnan region suddenly became a hub in an international network of transport and trade. It was not only commodities from eastern China that reached Kunming via Hong Kong and then Haiphong in Vietnam, but also many imports from Western countries.

In 1911, the establishment of the New Army in Kunming gave rise to a successful local regime that further pushed the development of industry and commercialization in the region. From 1911 to 1917, 38 roads were rebuilt and widened. Many streets were named after famous buildings, archways, offices, or monasteries. The ambition to plan the city as a modern metropolis resulted in the implementation of many new urban policies. To rationalize and reorder urban life, a unified opening time (7 a.m.) was introduced for all shops in 1912. Those who opened late were fined for non-compliance. Other regulations were also introduced for cleaning streets and unifying the colour of buildings. Pedestrians were also required to walk on either side of the street in one direction in an orderly fashion (Jie 2009: 24-25). These and other initiatives transformed the old city into a more efficient modern metropolis. Other development also promoted the economic growth in Yunnan province. In April 1912, electricity was brought to the city for the first time, supplied by the Shilongba Hydropower Plant in Yunnan, the first electricity-generating station in China. Around the same time, water-supply systems and telecommunications were also introduced.

Figure 9.2 The Military Academy

Source: authors' photo

The Kunming Municipal Administration was set up in 1922 to take over the role of the Police Bureau in overseeing planning, building regulations, and urban construction projects. Clear zoning of different urban functions and easier traffic flow were seen as priorities and, as a result, the city authorities decided to demolish the old city walls in the southern and eastern districts. From 1922, the streets, together with new markets, parks, and public spaces, started to play a much more important role in the spatial organization of the city, which was substantially different from the territorialized zones (urban

Figure 9.3 Huize Hall, Yunnan University



Source: authors' photo

quarters) of the ancient city. Accompanying these urban/infrastructural developments were important changes in lifestyles that were influenced by Western practices, such as food, fashion, and leisure pursuits (Jie 2009: 49).

At the same time, the early twentieth century also witnessed the construction of many new buildings that consciously adopted Western styles, albeit internally consisting of traditional wooden structures (Xie at al. 2009).

For example, the Military Academy, built in 1918, was designed using a combination of Western and Chinese styles in timber. Huize Hall in Yunnan

University, built in 1924, started to modify the traditional courtyard plan of the compound and incorporated a concrete structure.

The elevations of Huize Hall that can be seen today are evidence of architectural details that derive from Western design/drawing techniques, a practice motivated in part by the training of Chinese architects in Europe, such as Zhang Banhan (张帮翰), who studied in Paris. The idea of using new building features signified a new way of understanding architecture and the different kinds of knowledge it introduced. Notwithstanding these important developments, the name of the building, *Huize* (会泽) is deeply rooted in Chinese tradition; the term means 'gathering knowledge/benefaction'. What seems evident in such examples is that the preservation of tradition was more likely to be expressed in the otherwise hidden structures and names of buildings (and their meanings), rather than in their outward stylistic appearance. A number of churches, a hospital, and a theatre were similarly built using traditional timber-frame construction but clad in Western-style architectural features. There were of course exceptions to this rule, as in the buildings with larger spans (such as cinemas) where Western methods of building with reinforced concrete were used.

Influences from Central China

Another significant phase of the external influences on Kunming's urban development came during the Second World War, when the Japanese invaded China, occupied most of its major cities, and blocked its seaports. Yunnan province escaped this invasion and the Yunnan–Myanmar Highway became the major connection between China and the external world during the war. A number of Chinese universities, factories, and military forces were also relocated to Kunming, bringing with them the most advanced technology, manufacturing, and education. To reflect the rapid development during this period, Kunming's 1943 Masterplan was published to define the districts with different functions in the city. However, the plan was not implemented due to the civil war in China. The city wall to the south was totally demolished and a new financial street (Lanpin Street) was built in its place.

Skilled workers moved into Kunming from other regions of China, and with their skills and expertise many new factories were constructed. Between the 1930s and 1940s, Kunming built its first concrete factory and a steel factory. In 1933, the first building regulations were compiled and by the 1930s, timber construction methods had all but disappeared. Four city plans for Kunming were made in 1953, 1957, 1959, and 1962 respectively. The

plans primarily aimed to develop new districts and industry areas that were separated from the old town. Many public buildings and urban infrastructure facilities were provided during the period. However, the urban development of Kunming stagnated during the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. Few new building or construction was recorded during the period apart from a factory for Yunnan Baiyao Pharmaceutical Manufacturer, Chengdu-Kunming railway, and a large project aimed to 'claim the land from the Dianchi Lake' for agriculture usage. During the same period, on the other hand, a large amount of relics and historical buildings were demolished.

Wenming Street after the 1980s

After economic reform was introduced in the 1980s, urban-planning policies loosened their embrace of the ideological principles evident during the socialist-revolutionary era and focused more on progress and modernization. For this reason, the 1985 masterplan for Kunming proposed that the businesses area be further developed in the city centre.

In the process, the traditional streets became vulnerable to large-scale redevelopment and city-planning policies that aimed to widen roads for more efficient transportation and commercial activity. In pursuit of such contemporary urban infrastructure, the municipal masterplan proposed the demolition of houses located within defined boundaries to make way for new streets. In addition, the old style of courtyard houses was now considered derelict, old fashioned, and lacking proper kitchen and toilet facilities. In 1992 both Chuanchun and Wuchen Roads, which used to be the main streets where the governor's offices and grand courtyard houses were located, were finally demolished. Mr. Liu from the planning department remembered that there were no defined regulations for protecting cultural heritage during this demolition. The residents were reminded by planners to save beautifully carved old timber and stone decorations, and wooden windows and doors before the demolition, but few residents took notice of these requests. Many ornaments and other pieces were picked up by the planners who were on the sites and brought back and stored in the courtyard of the Planning Department, and eventually many of these building and ornamental remnants were salvaged and stored in the provincial museum.

Despite being one of the first group of cities to be awarded the title of Historical Cultural City in China in 1982, Kunming rapidly lost its stock of traditional houses built during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. The traditional courtyard houses in Kunming were called 'Stamp Houses' (to reflect the

Figure 9.4 Traditional houses, Wenming Street

Source: authors' photo

fact that the square footprint of the courtyard house resembled a Chinese stamp). As an architectural form, the Stamp House has gained increasing recognition from academic researchers on architecture since the 1950s, but the protection of traditional courtyard houses attracted the attention of the general public and the media only after the demolition of most of the traditional streets.

In 1998, the Kunming Urban Construction Archive Institute commissioned a survey of Wenming Street which was published in the book *The Investigation of the Design and Construction of the Wenming Street District* (KUCAI 1998). Wenming Street is a smaller and less important street in the history of Kunming and has smaller and rather ordinary courtyard houses along its frontage. Its importance is largely due to the attempts to preserve some traces of its historic urban/built fabric. Indeed, it is the last (and only) street in the city where such initiatives have taken place.

The book includes a detailed survey, with a series of drawings of the courtyard houses on Wenming Street. It states that the purpose of the survey was essentially to record the traditional houses as evidence of the historical cultural traditions and also to inform any future preservation projects. The authors argue that many of the houses surveyed are of great antiquity and possess a vitally important cultural heritage. Part of the strategy of preserving these buildings was to renovate the old houses to

reveal their original form and character. Four principles are mentioned in regard to this renovation process: 1) to reintegrate (and thereby protect) the 'spiritual' content of these representations and their physical forms; 2) to balance protection with reuse; 3) to combine new materials and protected materials/fragments; and 4) to utilize information gleaned from scientific surveys as evidence, rather than rely on 'subjective' decisions about methods of protection (Fang 1998). Other authors in the book note that such traditional houses in Kunming have been influenced not only by the commercial complexes found elsewhere in Yunnan province, from Tongchong to Dali, but also by the Qilou forms from Guangdong in South China and styles from the West. Hence there is no single version of what the local forms or local heritage of the houses should be.

Li Shiqiao believes that, in contrast to Western traditions where the preservation of original locations under original conditions constitutes the overriding priority of any conservation project and in which the archiving of documents serves an important intellectual purpose, in China the activity of 'reconstituting' old buildings, often through the use of new structures or materials, possesses some degree of 'immaterial authenticity' in the collective memories of people. Hence, questions of heritage, and therefore continuity of traditions, of architecture resided in the repeated reuse and reconstruction of building layouts rather than in their original siting or material preservation. In such an enterprise, authenticity was maintained through spatial and temporal relocation, so the original place of a historic building or monument is in the end not so significant (Li 2014: 162-179). This same understanding informed the refurbishment of Wenming Street, in the way traditional motifs and building elements were replicated or reused, without the need to preserve its original construction as a material artefact.

The brief for protecting architectural heritage on Wenming Street changed after 2004, when the regulations for protecting heritage were first formally codified. Before 2004, traditional houses were not identified by law as material artefacts that needed to be protected. After 2004, some courtyard houses on Wenming street were formally listed as listed buildings. The initial brief in 1990 for surveying and restoring the traditional houses on the street was to keep the authenticity (consistency) of the original styles. The traditional houses in Kunming were timber structures, different from the famous renovation projects in other places in China, for example in Xintiandi, Shanghai, where the buildings are made of brick. The restoration of timber structures requires specialist craftsmen, but such skills are a scarce resource in China today, particularly for such large-scale restoration projects.

This challenge was further exacerbated by the increasing difficulties of securing funding for such work.

Within the framework of a city partnership between Zurich and Kunming, a group of Swiss experts in historic preservation supported Kunming's preservation efforts in 1996 (Stutz 2002). The scholars from Zurich suggested that such renovations needed to go beyond the mere protection of individual cultural relics or antiquities to recognize the heritage value of the whole street and its public spaces as an integral part of the contemporary city (Gao 2012: 136).

The urban-planning policies in Kunming have incorporated this principle as well as following new developments in conservation regulations, and have started to include the whole street as a conservation area. In masterplans since the 1950s, plans have followed two primary principles: to preserve Wenming Street as the historical axis of the city; and to maintain the visual and spatial relationships between the three mountains and Dian Lake outside the city and the three hills and Green Lake within the old city boundaries. With the systematic demolition of historic streets in Kunming during the 1990s, and the rapid disappearance of much of the older fabric of the city, Wenming Street emerged as a remnant of a largely forgotten city that could be 're-authenticated' through the replication of architectural features and the part appropriation of building elements. Eventually developers were brought in with investment funding to develop Wenming Street as a commercial thoroughfare, but different policies were applied to the two sides of the street: new buildings on one side were designated for tourism, while the traditional courtyard houses on the other side were refurbished as cultural heritage monuments that record the historic past of Kunming city.

There are similar examples of the renovation of historic streets in other parts of China. Qianmen Street in Beijing, for example, has been renovated not because it is the most historically important street or possesses distinct architectural qualities, but because of its location and its exemplary function as part of the axis in the city. Other examples of renovated commercial streets include Fuzi Miao in Nanjing and Xintiandi in Shanghai. Both were existing traditional commercial streets that have been renovated in traditional styles. In some cities, there are also new commercial streets being designed and built in traditional forms in places with no historical evidence of such buildings. The Wenming Street project sought to reproduce the traditional styles of historic commercial streets, with the inclusion of new buildings that were deemed to possess some degree of 'immaterial authenticity' in the way Li suggests outlined earlier. In the production of

Figure 9.5 Shops, Wenming Street

Source: authors' photo

pseudo-traditional styles, the link with the past, as a general sensibility, appears to be more important than defining connections to particular points in the past. The latter approach, as we know, is more prevalent in restoration/conservation projects in the West where there is a tendency to 'freeze' a building or interior at a certain moment in time.

In the West, building refurbishment presents different connotations or implications when it comes to issues of repair, conversion, renovation, restoration, conservation, or retrofitting. It can range from restoring the original form of the buildings when first erected, to refurbishing, which records changes through the passage of time. Refurbishment is defined as making use of what is usable in existing (ageing) buildings; the skilful adaptation of building shells (which is valuable in its own right and not owing to any historic mystique) to a new or an updated version of its previous use (Marsh 1983: 3). Refurbishment can vary from a simple repair, like painting a façade, to a more complex process that includes structural reinforcement work.

In Wenming Street, some old courtyard houses have been renovated and listed as 'provincial heritage'. When the refurbishment started there were no guidelines for the refurbishment of historical buildings or any standard set of renovation practices in China. When the wooden residential houses required a change of use (to commercial buildings) such as shops,

Figure 9.6 Restored courtyard houses, Wenming Street

Source: authors' photo

restaurants, or hotels, questions were asked about how to 'renovate old building as the original form and structure' (Ding 1998: 20), and how to renovate the street district with side-by-side traditional courtyard houses to meet the requirements of sufficient fire escapes and protection against seismic activity (to level 8 on the Richter Scale) for all public/commercial buildings in Kunming. In other words, how could they be renovated to convincingly reflect a familiar historic setting of the street by resorting to replicated craftsmanship?

Eventually the link to the past was identified with traditional craftsmanship and local materials used in restoration. Competitions were held in Kunming to find and recruit the most skilled craftsmen who could make the details of the traditional building. A key feature of this process was the application of Chinese calligraphy to memorialise (and thereby re-authenticate), through stone wall inscriptions, the work of the last living craftsman able to undertake this work in the province. In this way, reconstructed history was somehow 'embedded' in contemporary construction, recollecting in the process forgotten or declining craft-skills.

Conclusion

As Peter G. Rowe and Seng Kuan explored in their book *Architectural Encounters with Essence and Form in Modern China*, since the opening of the Treaty Ports in the 1840s Chinese attitudes towards architecture have gone through various transformations—from ‘Chinese learning for essential principles and Western learning for practical application’ to contemporary buildings built with new materials and technology, but their forms would reflect socialist essence and Chinese cultural form. In recent years, there was a reversal to design buildings with contemporary essence, but represented Chinese form (Rowe and Kuan 2004). Yet to understand the reasons for the values attached to the ‘traditional styles’ of the commercial streets built in almost all of the large cities in China over the past decade, we have to recognise that both essence and form in these examples reveal changes that are different from those discussed in Rowe and Kuan’s book.

Marvin Trachtenberg has developed a new approach to understanding the temporal ‘stages’ of buildings in his recent book, *Building in Time: from Giotto to Alberti and Modern Oblivion* (2010). In his investigation of Western traditions Trachtenberg identifies important (but often misunderstood) overlaps in the different temporal ‘stages’ of building before the advent of the modern age. These overlaps enabled the design of buildings to be changed during longer periods of construction and occupancy. With the introduction of more systematic methods of procuring buildings, and the shorter life-spans of the structures, these overlaps were eventually lost and replaced with the staged programmes found in modern design and building schedules.

Different ‘temporal’ stages were reflected in the design and construction of the Forbidden City in Beijing during the Ming and Qing Dynasties. Twelve years were spent on gathering materials and making the elements for constructions, such as timber columns, tiles, and bricks, while only four years were needed to put the elements together and build the palace. Elaborate ritualized efforts were involved in collecting, making, and transferring the materials and components through the long passage of time before they could be properly integrated as the building came into being. Hence time was embedded in the building process itself, not only in the materials and compositions but also in the transporting and transforming of the materials that signified power and virtue. In the case of the renovation of Wenming Street in Kunming, we argue that the authenticity of the place relies on the practices of craftsmanship alone, which could transform raw materials into visibly traditional building

elements that registered historical change in various ways. Moreover, this connection to craftsmanship, meant that local identities were expressed through the agency of traditional forms of making, which were deemed to possess a higher value than buildings made with modern construction methods. We can therefore identify very different attitudes regarding protecting and inheriting cultural heritage in China compared to those expressed in the West—attitudes that give less value to material heritage than to their modes of crafting and fabricating.

Recapitulating Nicholas Temple's discussion about the shifting historical relationships between commercial, political, and religious life in the West (Temple 2018), and what these changes tell us about the temporality of building in the way articulated by Trachtenberg, it would be salutary to compare the impact of capitalism and the market on historic cities in China and Europe. Such a comparison, which is beyond the scope of this investigation, must acknowledge their very different cultural perspectives of commercial life: in particular, how representations of urban space over time have helped shape (or more recently diminish) our sense of place and collective memory. What we are witnessing in the contemporary globalized world is an extraordinary (one might claim alarming) homogenization of urban space in which 'contemporary consumerism pervades an amnesiac condition' (Temple 2016).

Following this cue, we would have to ask how the new sense of identity in the city today, as Arjun Appadurai argues, 'seeks to annex the global into their own practices of the modern' (Appadurai 1996: 5). This broadly 'compensatory' act perhaps best articulates what material reminders of the past (whether actual or reconstituted) can contribute to redefining our collective historicity against the synchronic and virtual backdrop of the digital world. In this context the West can learn much from Chinese culture, particularly how temporal change can be registered architecturally and in the urban framework without necessarily relying on formalistic terms of reference as temporal registers

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10. *Junzi* (君子), the Confucian Concept of the ‘Gentleman’, and its Influence on South Korean Land-Use Planning

Klaas Kresse

Abstract

The crowded, lively, and diverse cities of East Asia are a fascinating experience for the Western visitor. What some perceive as chaotic is actually the result of a set of values derived from Confucian culture that are reflected in the organization of the city. While Western philosophy believes in the dialectic idea that truth can be found through reason and ultimately leads to the resolution of contradictions, Eastern philosophy follows an aesthetic notion of order, which uses contradictions as a means of understanding the relationships among objects and events. Confucian aesthetics value harmony among differences more than rationality and uniformity, and it is this notion that seems to be reflected in the diverse and lively urban centres of East Asia. In this chapter, the relation between philosophical ideals and urban expression is explored through the investigation of a series of developmental steps in the history of Seoul. Starting with the *junzi* (君子; ‘gentleman’), the exemplary person in Confucian thought, it becomes clear that moral values, institutional frameworks, and economic processes have produced a certain type of specifically East Asian urbanism. The Park regime in the 1960s, in its push for economic development, radically embraced Western values; this choice has also had consequences for the planning, form, and land-use diversity of the modern Korean city. The investigation into the application of Western concepts in practice in Korea reveals that certain Confucian values remain present in modern Korea, in hybridization with the imported Western typologies.

Keywords: land use, urban planning, apartment complexes, Confucius, *junzi* (君子, ‘gentleman’)

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Introduction

Visitors from the West are often impressed with the dense, heterogeneous, and vibrant cities in East Asia. What presents itself as a chaotic jumble of activities is the result of an interplay of governance, institutional frameworks, and economic forces rooted in Confucian culture. It is the interplay of these forces that unveils its charm to the Western visitor through the experience of East Asian cities. Fundamental differences in Eastern and Western philosophy¹ in, for example, the notions of order (aesthetic vs. rational), the concept of identity (collectivist vs. individualist), or the composition of the social structure, leave their mark on the urban order of cities, creating exciting and diverse cities in East Asia. To explore this subject in more depth, this chapter focuses on the development of Seoul from the beginning of the Joseon Dynasty (1392-1897) until the end of the twentieth century. A particularly interesting part of Seoul's history is the shift that took place in the 1960s under the Park regime, when urban development embraced modern Western forms of planning and design, leading to a drastic change in the appearance of the city and a loss of its heterogeneous, lively, and chaotic urbanism.

This chapter starts with a discussion of the differences between Eastern and Western thought, based on Aristotelian and Confucian philosophy. In the next part, I use the ideal of the *junzi* (君子, 'an exemplary person or gentleman') as a tool to discuss the transitions in urban forms and land-use distribution through changes of governance, property rights, and the economy. Seoul experienced a series of forceful, abrupt political changes between the transition from the Joseon Dynasty and the late twentieth century. The most important of which were the forceful opening of the country's ports to trade (1876), the first Sino-Japanese war (1894-1895), the Japanese annexation of Korea (1910-1945), the Korean War (1950-1953), leading to the division of Korea (1954), and the military coup in the Republic of Korea (1961). With each of these abrupt changes came new philosophies, new ideals, and new leadership—and therefore new and different expressions of city life. The paradigm shift of the 1960s appears especially clean and clear when seen from afar. As a result of the developmental policy of the new regime, the pre-1960s urban structure of Seoul, which resembled the

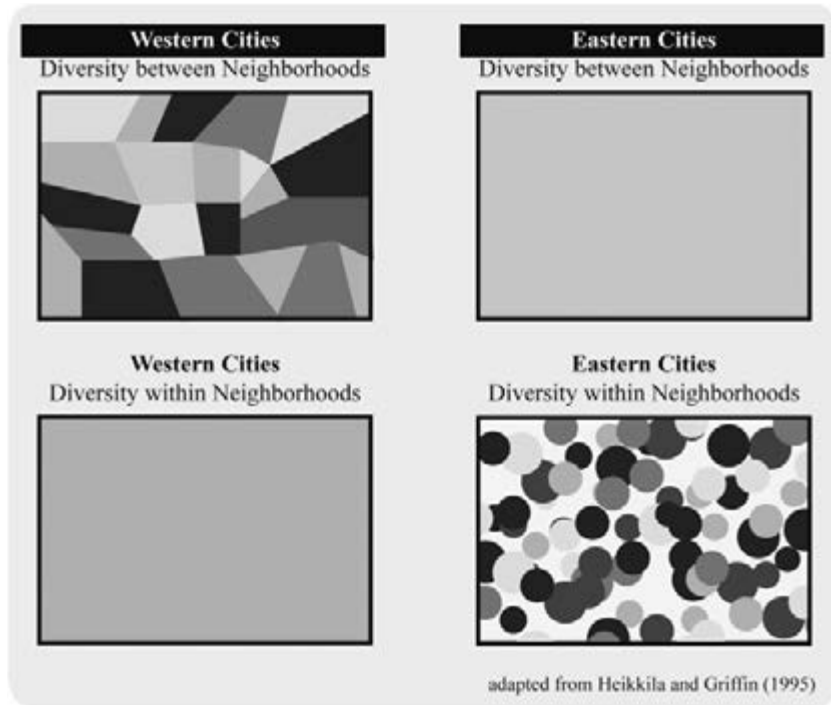
1 What is referred to here as Western philosophy refers to ancient Greek, specifically Aristotelian philosophy. Eastern philosophy is referred to as Confucianism. These generalizations are made for the sake of simplifying the argument. It should be noted here that Western philosophy also has tendencies towards collectivism and aesthetic order and in Eastern philosophy tendencies toward legalism were also present (see Nisbett 2004; Bracken, this volume; Li, this volume).

dense, heterogeneous, and vibrant urbanism of East Asia that Western visitors are often impressed by, was replaced by a different urbanism with a rather uniform, repetitive, and rational appearance. It appears that a shift in mentality has taken place, from a typically Eastern, Confucian one that is based on virtues of harmony and balance towards a Western, rational, monotonous and efficient planning paradigm. In this chapter, I investigate to what extent this is really true. How much of the typical Eastern traits of Confucian order, collectivism, and status sensitivity is still to be found in the apartment complexes despite the application of Western city-planning tools in South Korea? The last section of the text looks into this phenomenon in more detail, focusing on the topic of apartment complexes in modern Korea.

Land-use diversity in the East and West

The charm of East Asian cities is in large part due to the experience of dense, busy, and diverse activities within a compact space. Programmes appear to be in constant flux, activities seem to be in constant negotiations with one another for space or passage. Space is scarce and therefore the usage of space changes with time; activities integrate and overlap. The same space can be used, for instance, as an archive, storage area, showroom, store, workshop, public space, for circulation, etc. This is a condition that has also existed in European cities, at least to some extent, but it has been overcome by the efficiency and rationality paradigm of modernist Western planning. The question emerging now is whether Western land-use planning is, due to its insistence on rationality, less diverse? A study by Eric J. Heikkila and Marc Griffin helps to understand this difference through a comparison of the scales of Western and the Eastern land-use distribution. They find a high level of land-use diversity on a neighbourhood scale in East Asian cities, meaning that many different types of land use are cramped into densely packed spaces without a clearly visible domination of one type of use. The generalization the authors use is based on the perception that, on the city scale, East Asian cities appear to be similarly chaotic, regardless of one's location. In the modern Western city, on the other hand, land use is organized rather differently. On the micro scale, the land use is monotonous and repetitive. Diversity happens on a macro level, where there are very distinctive features in different parts of the city that relate to different lifestyles, economies, or businesses (Heikkila and Griffin 1995). It is therefore neither useful nor accurate to categorize one type of city as diverse and the other as monotonous, as both types of cities show diversity at different scales. What is striking, though,

Figure 10.1 Comparing land-use diversity on on city and neighbourhood scale



Source: author drawing

is the relationship between the philosophies in the East and the West that lurks behind the different orders of these urban structures.

The work of Heikkila and Griffin presents evidence from multiple East Asian megacities, ranging from Hong Kong and Taipei to Seoul, Beijing, Shanghai, and Tokyo. But since the ambition of this research is to investigate the influence of philosophical thought on urban use and form over the course of time, the study of East Asian metropolises at large would be too complex and extensive. Instead, I focus on philosophical, urbanist relations and relate the juxtaposing of Eastern and Western paradigms to South Korea's political turn in the 1960s. Korea is striking in the amount of transformation that took place during the modernization period, starting from the 1960s. The urban structure of Korea appears to demonstrate the overcoming of the Eastern paradigm of aesthetic order by a Western, modernist planning paradigm, as seen in the replacement of the small-scale urban fabric with large-scale developments with a high level of repetition and a low level of land-use diversity.

Heikkila and Griffin build up a dialectical argument based on the juxtaposition of Confucian Asian and Aristotelian Western thought represented by urban form and land-use planning. In Confucian philosophy, a sense of harmony among differences is central to the aesthetic ideal—an idea that stands in contrast to the Western idea of rationality and uniformity. The principles of Eastern and Western thought revolve primarily around notions of individualism, legalism, and materialism in the West and collectivism, moralism, and spiritualism in the East. These cultural and philosophical factors are reflected in the regions' respective ideas of order: on the one hand, we have the ideal of a rational or logical order in the West; on the other, Confucianism promotes the ideal of an aesthetic order. David L. Hall and Roger T. Ames discuss these differences between Confucian and Western order and distinguish a set of conditions for either type. For example, the Western rational or logical order can be described as a state of completion achieved as a consequence of applying a pre-established idea of relations to a given situation (Hall and Ames 1987). This implies that there is an act of closure leading to a new static state (synthesis) of being. The principles applied to reach this new, elevated order are derived from a higher order, such as the Mind of God, the transcendent laws of nature, the positive laws of a given society, the categorical imperative, or any other externally rational normative order. Here the aim is visualized as transcendence into a new, finalized state represented by a new order, which remains stable for as long as it is not superseded. In the aesthetic order that is typical of Confucianism, order is achieved through the development of new patterns. Aesthetic order is grounded in disclosure and realized in a mutual relationship between an aspect, element, or event and a particular context. The aesthetic order emerges as a consequence of different actors' contributions to a given context and the negotiations between them. Rules are shaped through a process of interactions among persons. Therefore the rules in Confucian societies are less normative than those of Western societies. Even though rules are generally agreed upon, there is always some leeway in the application of the law (Lee and McNulty 2003). Here there is a conceptual polarity that searches for balance among different actors, rather than aiming to achieve a stable state. On the contrary, the aesthetic order based on the search for balance implies a permanent motion, a permanent cyclical rhythm represented by the metaphor of the *yin* and *yang*. The transcendence of objects and relations in the Eastern order is not happening at random; rather, the elements of the context interrelate in accordance with some higher purpose or goal, leading to a new harmonious order (Hall and Ames 1987).

These Eastern and Western philosophies can be traced through their resulting land-use patterns. The modern Western city shows a clear

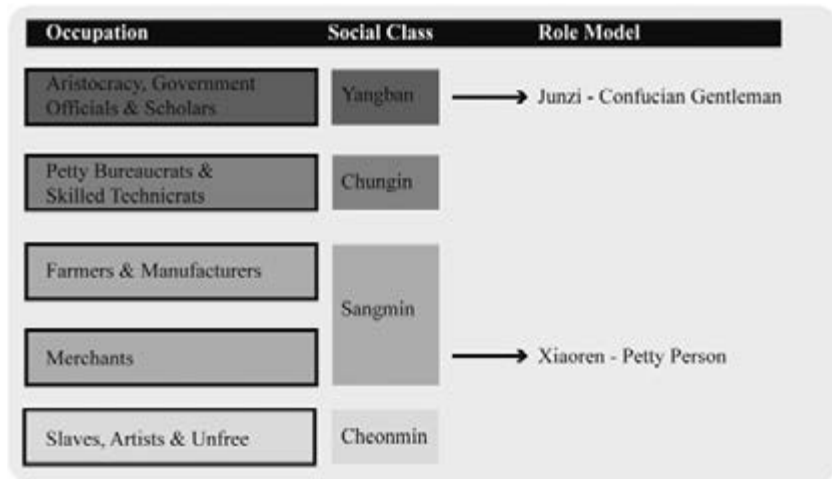
resemblance to the notion of rationality linked to a superseding higher order. The paradigm of efficiency supports a functionalist order, which results in the organization of land-use patterns into homogenous, repetitive areas through zoning policies and building legislation. The evolution of modernist planning as propagated in the Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne (CIAM) movement shows a strong reference to Aristotelian rational order. And it was this Western order that Korea embraced in the push for modernization in the early 1960s. On the other hand, it is the notion of the permanent cyclical rhythm of becoming, the negotiations between different actors and the maintenance of harmony among differences, that we can read in the manifestation of the land use in the traditional East Asian city.

Junzi (君子): the Confucian 'gentleman' as a role model and a source of power and wealth

This research approaches the task of describing the relationship between land use and philosophy through the notion of the *junzi* (君子, 'exemplary person or gentleman'). In Confucian thought, *junzi* is the classic, ideal role model, whose values and virtues influence governance and, in the end, get reflected in the city.

Confucianism started to dominate Korea with the overthrow of the Buddhist/Taoist Koryeo Dynasty in a military coup (late fourteenth century), after which an aristocratic and bureaucratic leadership was established based on Confucian values. Neoconfucianist thought dominated Korea from the beginning of the Joseon Dynasty in the late fourteenth century until the early twentieth century (Palais 1984). Confucianism favours moral purity over profit-seeking and balances morality with materialism. Moralism and profit-seeking are given opposing roles in society by placing the *junzi* at the top of the social hierarchy, while the *xiaoren* (小人, 'petty person'), who is characterized as greedy and materialistic, is placed at the bottom. The *junzi* is the idealized Confucian gentleman who strives for wisdom, sagacity, and moral purity. Devotion to social justice, rather than personal wealth, is rewarded through the greater prestige associated with scholars and government officers who have passed the Chinese-style civil-service examinations, rather than with manufacturers and merchants. In fact, materialistic ambitions are considered immoral and profit-seeking activities are looked down upon (Lee and McNulty 2003). A quote from the *Analects* summarizes thus: 'The exemplary person seeks harmony (*he*), not sameness (*tong*); the petty person does the opposite' (*Analects* 13.23).

Figure 10.2 Social strata during Joseon Dynasty



Source: author drawing

The hierarchy of Korean Confucian society places the aristocracy, government officials, and scholars at the top. On the second level are farmers, then manufacturers, and then the last category of free citizens, merchants. Finally, there is the underclass of slaves and artists. The top layer of Korea's social strata of aristocrats and government officials, the *yangban* (양반), was an elite of about ten percent of society that could be entered through the successful completion of Chinese-style civil-service examinations that tested their knowledge of Confucian classics and Chinese literature and history. Unlike in China during the Tang Dynasty, where the examination replaced the aristocratic/bureaucratic hereditary office-holding of the ruling elite, in Korea the Confucian civil-servants' examination did not lead to a greater degree of social mobility during the Joseon Dynasty. While the examination was open to all free citizens, implying the presence of social mobility based on merit, in practice access to the knowledge, and especially the resources needed to be able to prepare for the examinations, excluded the majority of society from a fair chance of taking part in them. This significantly limited social mobility and resulted in many examples of long bloodlines of families with continuous presence as public officials. Even though social mobility is possible in this system and did occur, it was the exception rather than the rule (Palais 1984). The *yangban* elite held certain privileges, such as the right to collect taxes over landholdings and the exemption from taxes to the emperor. Even though there was no formal system of land ownership during

the Joseon Dynasty, privileges over land in Korea's feudal system were given on a personal basis for the span of a person's service to the king. Gradually, these privileges became inheritable by future generations and resulted in *de facto* ownership of land as well as a strong and stable *yangban* elite (Lee 1994; La Grange and Jung 2004). Passing the civil-service examination allowed access to the bureaucracy, while land-ownership formed the economic base of their power. The king's distribution of land to loyal bureaucrats and the confiscation of land from non-collaborating *yangban* was an effective means of exercising state power during the Joseon Dynasty (Lee 1994).

Korea's relationship between state power and the bureaucracy differed from the situation in China. The power of the aristocratic/bureaucratic elite in Korea was stronger and held onto their position longer than did the elite in China. The first reason for this was, as mentioned above, commoners' financial difficulties to even prepare for the civil-service examinations. Second, as James B. Palais explains, China formed a protective buffer around Korea that protected the country from the disruptive forces of foreign invasion and major economic changes. This caused a delay in the development of a trade economy, due to which Korea remained an agrarian society until it opened to foreign commerce in 1876 (Palais 1984). Following Palais' research, we find that the main differences in the manifestation of Neoconfucianism in China and Korea is the preservation of the aristocratic/bureaucratic ruling class in Korea. This was caused by two factors: first, as there was no need for a permanent army in Korea, the need for a strong state and therefore a strong state bureaucracy was weakened; second, due to trade restrictions with Japan to the East and Manchuria to the North, there was hardly any societal change through the economic empowerment of certain classes until the end of the nineteenth century. Korea remained an agricultural society strongly influenced by local landlords and the aristocratic/bureaucratic elite.

Shifting ideals of the *junzi* and the concept's influence on land-use distribution

Since the overthrow of the Koryeo Dynasty in the fourteenth century, Neoconfucian thought replaced the previous Buddhist/Taoist practice. The philosophical ideal, as explained in the previous section, is the exemplary person or *junzi*, whose status is opposed to the *xiaoren*, the petty person driven by materialistic ambitions. The period between the end of the Koryeo Dynasty and the end of the Joseon Dynasty can be separated into two parts. In the first part, from the end of the fourteenth until the mid-seventeenth

century the political, economic, and philosophical situation remained in large part stable. Korea at this time was an agrarian society with an emperor at the top of its social hierarchy, but with a strong aristocratic/bureaucratic elite ruling large parts of the country.

Similar to classical Chinese cities, the Korean capital of Hanseong, today known as Seoul, was laid out following geomantic principles, in a valley between four mountains with the Cheonggyecheon stream running through its centre (Pai 1997). However, it was also different from Chinese cities because it did not contain an organized grid of streets and had no central axis. Instead, the area within the city was unevenly and haphazardly developed with one-storey courtyard buildings.

The class system described earlier influenced the distribution of land in the city. At the time, land use was differentiated by the social class of the residents, in accordance with the categories of early *yangban* society, rather than by its function. The laws of *Kyunkukdaejun* described the size, height, and use of architectural elements according to residents' social class (Pai 1997). Even though areas were divided by social class, it is not possible to speak of strict land-use zoning or ghettoization: on the one hand, the houses of wealthier people also provided residences for lower-class workers; on the other, commercial functions were frequently incorporated into residential areas, resembling the dense, organic, and diverse land-use characteristics of East Asia. Hanseong's main function at the time was to be a residence for the king and the national administrative centre for a feudal society with an agrarian economy. Royal palaces were located at the foot of the mountains, facing south. The higher administrators and scholars lived in the areas between the palaces; the main road was Jongno Street, which ran in an east-west direction parallel to the Cheonggyecheon stream. Government-regulated stores could be found on Jongno Street, stretching down to Namdaemun Gate (Kim 2012).

As Dong-hwan Ko points out, changes to the socio-economic structure emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century during the Joseon Dynasty, resulting in Seoul's transition towards being a commercial city. In this case it was not a philosophical or forceful paradigm shift that initiated change, but a combination of spatial and economic factors. On the one hand, the introduction of the Uniform Land Tax Law, gradually introduced in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, marked a turning point towards the rising importance of commercial activities. With the Uniform Land Tax system also came the introduction of a commercial currency. Commercial currency is the basis for a society with a larger amount of occupational specialization and therefore a greater diversity of occupations.

As a result of this, the importance of the peasantry weakened, especially due to the large numbers of peasants who became engaged in commercial activities.

The class of the *chungin* (중인), traditionally situated under the *yangban* in the social strata of the Joseon Dynasty, largely engaged in this newly emerging commerce, leading to the growing economic and political importance of this class. Furthermore, the role of the city was strengthened as a centre for market activities, which came about due to the increasing divide between the lifestyles and culture of the city and countryside. Urban space expanded beyond the city walls, where new road connections for the purpose of trade were built, stretching throughout the country. Together with increased shipping capacities and naval trading routes, the overall connectivity of the country improved. The circulation of commodities in this improved transportation network was faster and, therefore, more profitable.

Seoul, as the central node of this new national economic market zone, grew quickly into a commercial city (Ko 1997: 13). A new urban culture emerged, driven less by moral, Confucian principles, and more directed towards the urban masses as a form of entertainment under the name 'town culture'. It is estimated that a large part of Seoul's society engaged in commercial activities, as this quotation from an inspector in the annals of King Chongjo's fifth reign shows: 'Besides the clerks attached to various government agencies, eight or nine out of ten residents of the capital make their living by trading' (Ku Su-on 1781, quoted in Ko 1997: 110). The backbone of society was no longer exclusively the peasantry, as the *chungin* become increasingly important economically. Based on this economic importance and their new self-esteem, the *chungin* were able to improve their status in society. Whereas in the past the *yangban* had been undisputed leaders, even taking possession of *chungin* properties without legal base, now the *chungin* increasingly began to demand fair legal treatment.

As mentioned above, trade took place informally from houses in the residential quarters via stalls or by peddling. Additionally, three new market places emerged during this time at Jongno, Ihyeon, and Chilpae. It was especially the result of the vast expansion of informal, unplanned commercial activity that emerged in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that contributed to the emergence of the dense, dynamic, and diverse land use Heikkila and Griffin refer to in their comparison between Eastern and Western urbanization. From this perspective, we find that the diverse, lively, and at times probably quite contradictory land-use patterns in Seoul were primarily a result of the unregulated occupation of city space for commercial activities.

Table 10.1 Ideological Shifts in Korea since the Joseon Dynasty and their Impact on Property Rights and Spatial Organisation

Period	Role Model	Religion / Ideology	Spatial Organisation	Property Rights	Backbone of Society
14 th – early 17 th century	Junzi	Neo-Confucianism	Geomantic, land use based on rank	Emperor, feudal land use rights becoming inheritable	Peasants
late 17 th – early 20 th century	Junzi	Neo-Confucianism	Rising commercialism & small scattered commerce; emergence of three new markets	Greater protection of Chung'in's property rights	Chungin
1910-1945 (Japanese Occupation)	Modern Western civilisation	Social Darwinism	Modernization & industrialisation	Establishment of individual property rights registered in the cadastre	Japanese military
1945-1961	---	---	Stagnation / destruction / rapid urbanisation	US led land redistribution after Japanese colonialism	US military
1961 – 1979 (Park era)	Minjok	Economic Development	Modern / rational	Private, individual	Korean militarised masses

Source: Authors own interpretation

With the Japanese invasion of Korea in 1910, the Joseon Dynasty came to an end. Influenced by the theories of Herbert Spencer's *Principles of Sociology*, Japanese imperialists had embraced social Darwinist ideas in an attempt to avoid the fate of China, India, and the African nations that had been taken over by Western imperialists. The ideas of social Darwinism were introduced to Japanese rulers by Kato Hiroyuki, a Japanese jurist, academic, and government advisor who was strongly influenced by Spencer. Particularly striking was the belief in the superiority of Western civilization and the urgency to Westernize that emerged from this belief. Westernization became a synonym for competitiveness and in the end was associated with the survival of the nation (Middell 2006).

Inspired by the rational and efficient organization of modern Western societies, it was believed that a society with a higher degree of division of labour had a greater chance of survival. Consequently, the Japanese colonial government in Korea made an effort to concentrate on urban development via industry and the construction of infrastructure. Land was confiscated from Korean landowners and transferred to the Japanese state or its collaborators. Individual property rights were established for the first time in Korea and registered in a cadaster. As a result of this Westernization and its attendant legislative processes, there were shifts in the urban structure of Seoul motivated by the ideals of rationalization and optimization. Projects carried out during Japanese imperial rule were mainly infrastructural and industrial (harbour, industry, rail routes, etc.), meant to improve the country's competitiveness, and to optimize the roads and living environments of the emerging shantytowns. Living environments, if found to be inefficient and a hindrance to traffic, were redesigned with the help of land-readjustment principles imported from Germany. However, functional land-use zoning, including commercially used land, was largely ignored and left to self-organize. Seoul's diverse jumble of land uses therefore prevailed in large parts of the city during the Japanese occupation (Sohn 2003; Kim 2013).

The period between the end of Japanese colonial control over Korea in 1945 and Park Chung-hee's military coup in 1961 was a time of stagnation. These were the country's first years of independence, a time that saw much destruction due to the Korean War (1950-1953), and a time of uncontrolled mass migration to Seoul after the end of the war. The city's housing was insufficient for the large number of migrants, so shantytowns continued to emerge, mainly along the rivers and on the foothills of the mountains (Ha 2001; Ha 2007; Shin and Kim 2015). However, one significant reform of the distribution of land did take place during this period. After the end of the Japanese occupation, due to the difficulty of defining clear property

rights and in an attempt to break with Korea's history of the strong influence of a landed elite, landholdings over three hectares were redistributed to the tillers of the fields (Leipziger et al. 1992; Jung 2014). With the military coup in 1961, the political situation stabilized and, under the rule of Park Chung-hee, new economic and industrialization policies emerged in an effort to develop a modern South Korean nation.

Modernization from the 1960s onwards

Park Chung-hee envisioned the modernization of the economy and society similar to the Japanese model, but faced the dilemma of convincingly promoting an agenda of industrialization and Westernization without appearing to be too close to, or sympathetic with, the former Japanese colonial regime. The Park regime therefore employed an alternative, nationalist Korean narrative that broke with the idealization of Confucian values and the aristocratic/bureaucratic *yangban* elite (Jager 2003).

Sheila Miyoshi Jager describes how Park fell back on the writings of nationalist intellectual Chae-ho Sin, who had already been rewriting Korean history from a nationalist perspective in the early twentieth century. In his writings, Sin declares the *yangban* to be an aberration, not a true representation of the authentic Korean tradition. Andre Schmid elaborates that Sin was not looking to reform corrupt Confucian practices, leading to a revitalized Korean nation, but instead was seeking a radically different alternative to Confucian thought and its idealization of the *junzi*. This led him to establish an ethnic definition of the nation through the term *minjok* (민족), the militarized ethnic Korean masses (Schmid 2002). Sin's line of thought followed a hero-centred view of national history that examined the history of the Korean nation and race by focusing on the subject of bloodlines, highlighting the role of the oppressed *minjok* masses as the antagonist of the corrupt and weak *yangban* elite. He made the absence of loyal men the reason for the Japanese colonial oppression of Korea and argued for a shift away from Confucian spiritualism with its idealization of morals and the arts.

Sin described the *minjok* as strong, loyal men, known for their fierce and combative spirit. Social Darwinist tendencies can also be found in Sin's writings. The focus of his writings is not the individual warrior but the *minjok* masses, struggling in a battle for survival. During the Joseon Dynasty the *minjok* class, according to Sin, was gradually weakened and corrupted by a class of literary and dilettantish *yangban* elite. Self-assertiveness, a typical

feature of the *minjok* according to Sin, faded away; military independence was lost and replaced with a reliance on Chinese support (Jager 2003). The class of the so-called 'exemplary person' was detached from the needs and desires of the oppressed masses. Sin blamed the lack of focus of the ruling *yangban* elite on its lack of masculine virtues, and signalled that this was the main factor in Korea's defeat by Japanese colonialization, calling for an alternative national ideal in the form of the *minjok*. However, the idealized *minjok* nevertheless appeals to the traditional Confucian virtues of filial piety and ancestor worship. As Andre Schmid explains, it is the belief in the common bloodline and the respect for ancestral origins—not a focus on the territory of the Korean peninsula—that plays the decisive role in uniting the masses as one Korean people with a shared bloodline (Schmid 2002).

Park Chung-hee activated Sin's nationalist rewriting of the Korean narrative in support of his nationalistic growth policy. He broke with the Confucian balance of moral and materialist values represented by the opposing extremes of the *junzi* and the *xiaoren* to proclaim a new, modern spirit: 'spiritual posture is no less important than external and material posture' (Park 1970: 18). With this shift towards a new role model that embraced the coexistence of spiritual and materialistic values evolved a modernized Korean nation, which replaced the aristocratic/bureaucratic elite with a new administrative technocracy. Merchants and businessmen, especially when collaborating in the nation's five-year economic plans, received government rewards for the achievement of production or sales targets in the form of prioritized access to credit at preferential interest rates (UN-HABITAT 2008). This practice led to guaranteed profits in the national markets that the government distributed as bonuses for achieving growth targets overseas. The government's control over banks and credit can be interpreted as a continuation of an ancient practice in Korean governance, in which the government would assign monopolies to selected individuals in the form of exclusive trading rights for certain goods. The land and housing market is an example of a sector in which *chaebol* (재벌, 'large conglomerates') invest in order to receive easy, guaranteed profits in return (Jung 2003).

The modernization efforts under the Park regime were focused on developing the economy as a means to maintain the country's sovereignty under the pressure of poverty, the destruction of war, and threats from the North Korean communist regime. Park described the urgency of nation-building for Korea as a nation of people that were 'determined never again to be poor, weak or dumb' (Park 1970). Another factor for this urgency to develop the economy was that the Park regime needed to show economic success in order to constitute its legitimacy. Park came into power through a military

Figure 10.3 Confucian order in 'Painting of the City of Supreme Peace'

Source: National Museum of Korea

coup, not through a revolution or a democratic election, and therefore he had no moral or democratic legitimacy for his presidency. Fast economic success thus became the regime's primary goal in order to shore up its legitimacy (Kim 1999).

The struggle to establish a modernized Korean nation found urban expression in a radical break with the past and the adoption of modern Western planning tools. First the modern planning tools introduced to Korea by the Japanese, such as German land-readjustment, were employed to produce single- or two-storey housing on individual plots (Lee 2002). Then, from the 1970s onwards, the modernist planning philosophy of the 'functional city', with its dependence on cars and programmatic zoning, was adopted in addition to the land-readjustment principle. Seoul was in dire need of a solution for rapid urbanization. The increasing problem of shantytown construction due to the rapid influx of people from the countryside needed to be tackled. Further, the success of economic development created a new middle class that needed appropriate housing to reflect their new status. The main weapons of choice to address these housing problems, borrowed from the library of modernist planning tools, were residential-zoning plans and Clarence Perry's Neighbourhood Unit Principle, a residential planning scheme for urban sites. Both tools were applied on a large scale and resulted in the construction of large apartment complexes consisting of standardized collective housing units typical of the Fordist production culture now applied in Korea (Gelezeau 2008).

Ironically, apartments were not initially very popular among the citizens of Seoul. A policy of housing government officials in the newly developed area of Gangnam, south of the Han river, had the effect of people regularly moving back to the north side of the Han river after their mandatory period of two years living in Gangnam expired. Two factors influenced the population's acceptance of apartment living: 1) the image associated with apartment living; and 2) the access apartment owners had to prestigious schools (Choe 2003). First, to improve the reputation of apartments a campaign was founded to promote the good reputation of newly constructed districts. Also, in an attempt to improve the prestige of the apartment complexes, expatriates returning from abroad and high-ranking government officials received priority and beneficial conditions when choosing to live in apartments. Second—and this is the measure that gave the decisive push to the attractiveness of the new living environments—some of the best schools in the city were relocated to the south of the river (Sohn 2003). Living in modern apartment complexes took off as the dominant housing type of new housing construction in Seoul, and by 1999 the number of people residing in apartments in Seoul superseded those living in other types of housing (Heeson 2013).

The discrepancy between the diversity of land use on different scales was introduced through the work of Heikkila and Griffin with their comparative diagram of Eastern and Western land-use planning, which can now be seen happening in Seoul. On the one hand, parts of the city consisting of the old urban fabric feature a jumble of diverse and, at times, confusing land uses; on the other, the adoption of modernist planning tools has increasingly created high-rise apartment enclaves with very little land-use diversity on a neighbourhood scale. The rational, efficient planning concepts imported from the West create a safe but monofunctional and repetitive urban landscape. However, there is one exception to this layout, which resembles the traditional urban structure. Specific to the Korean high-rise apartment is the location of the much-needed non-residential programme, such as supermarkets, and other retail facilities and services supporting everyday life. This non-residential programme is bundled into generic buildings called *keunseng* (한국인근), which is an abbreviation for 'neighbourhood support facility'. These three- to four-storey buildings are located on the edge of apartment complexes, with access from side streets that contain a diverse mix of land uses that can easily be altered as demand changes (Kim 2007). The *keunseng* resembles a condensed version of the traditional dense land-use diversity, squeezed inside a modern building.

Confucian traces in Korean modernization

The previous section explored how shifts from a traditional Confucian society and its respective urbanism towards a more Western planning paradigm have taken place in Seoul. It is now time to return to the questions that I raised at the beginning of this chapter: How much of the typical traits of a Confucian society can still be found in the apartment-complex typology adopted from the West? And how far do Confucian customs still prevail within these Western typologies?

The adopted apartment complex has been hybridized in two ways: first, in the role it plays in allowing access to prestigious education; and second, in the role it plays in accommodating a newly emerging middle class in search of a collective identity. The notion of hierarchy is still a dominating factor of everyday life and human interactions in Korea. Consequently, higher status gives access to certain privileges and, therefore, a better quality of life. Similar to the Joseon Dynasty, education still plays an important role in Korean culture today by enabling people to climb the social hierarchy.

In Korea today, access to the best universities is a door to economic success and social status. Affiliation with one of the top universities gives access to better companies, better positions, and higher pay. The relocation of some of the best schools to the Gangnam area resulted in a new willingness to relocate to newly constructed apartments. School-district affiliation has become a dominant factor in real-estate prices, where the value of an apartment is now inflated due to the access it grants to prestigious schools. What is striking in this process is that, similar to Joseon times, the chances of social mobility are dependent on economic means. In the Joseon Dynasty the civil-service examinations were, in principle, open to all, but due to the costs of the preparation and time that needed to be invested, successfully partaking in them and entering the elite as a result of doing well was hardly possible for people from the lower classes. What we see happening in Korea now is that property ownership in some of the most expensive residential areas of the country grants the privilege of access to the best schools in the country. These schools give the highest probability of entering the best universities and, therefore, getting the best jobs and the highest pay and status. Similar to traditional structures, we find that economic means and real-estate ownership are a way of ensuring a competitive advantage in the struggle to enter the elite.

The second way that apartment complexes are influenced by traditional values lies in how they respond to the desire for collectivism and the need to belong to a defined group. The newly emergent middle class in the 1960s

Figure 10.4 Comparing a typical small-scale neighbourhood to an apartment complex



Source: author photos

had no role models to fall back on and flocked into apartment complexes as their preferred living environments. Valérie Gelazeau refers to apartment complexes as ‘An “Urban Middle-Class Production Factory” of the Years of Rapid Economic Growth’, because prior to the late 1960s a modern middle class simply did not exist in Korea. This class of educated office workers, managers, lawyers, engineers, and the newly established technocratic bureaucracy was in need of a suitable living environment, which they found in apartment complexes. Due to a lack of effective policies to create social or affordable housing within apartment complexes, they developed into homogeneous, gated living environments for the middle and upper-middle classes. Brand names shown boldly on their facades communicate this belonging to a certain group and therefore help overcome status insecurities.

It seems that some customs rooted in Confucian culture remain despite the adoption of Western planning principles in Seoul. However, the most exciting aspect of traditional East Asian urbanism—land-use diversity—does not affect the experience of daily life anymore, as it has been banished to a separate building at the edge of these complexes.

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11. Home Within Movement

The Japanese Concept of *Ma* (間): Sensing Space-time Intensity in Aesthetics of Movement

Renske Maria van Dam

Abstract

The ubiquity of immanent change and movement in contemporary urban landscape seems to exceed the present cognitive and sensitive abilities of our species and changes the relation between people and the environment. The emergence of the metropolis affects our sense of home. In Euro-centric architectural discourse, this is more often than not referred to as a general shunning of place that results in an experience of homelessness. In contradiction to the negative connotation of deterritorialization and displacement in Euro-centric discourse, in Asian discourse there are alternative sensibilities. In Beijing's tradition of community building, this fluid concept of home is visible in the courtyard typology (in historical order: *fang* (坊), *danwei* (单位), and superbloc). Social interactions, based, respectively, on family relations, work, and lifestyles, are the key to the conceptualization and experience of feeling at home. In Japan, this is further conceptualized in the word *ma* (間). Normally translated as 'gap' or 'interval', *ma* describes the 'pregnant nothingness' with which the contemporary experience of home resonates. In this way, the concept of *ma* interferes with the Euro-centric philosophy of difference and inspires us to look at the modern urban environment from a different perspective, as a potential 'fifth dimension' in architecture.

Keywords: architecture, Japan, China, homelessness, *ma* (間), community building

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Félix Guattari starts his essay ‘Ecosophical practices and the restoration of the “subjective city”’ with an accurate observation on the modern urban environment:

Contemporary human beings have been fundamentally deterritorialized. Their original existential territories—bodies, domestic spaces, clans and cults—are no longer secured by a fixed ground; but henceforth they are indexed to a world of precarious representations and in perpetual motion (Guattari 2015: 97).

Perpetual motion directly influences our experience and conceptualization of home. As Guattari continues, ‘Young people are walking around the streets with *Walkmans* glued to their ears, and are habituated by refrains produced far, very far, from their homelands. Their homelands—anyway, what could that mean to them? It is surely not the place where their ancestors have lived since time immemorial; neither is it the place where they were born, nor they will die’ (2015: 97). Euro-centric architectural discourse, as many other modern discourses, struggles with this sense of homelessness. In the words of the Dutch landscape designer Adriaan Geuze, ‘The contemporary city has been transformed into a modern cultural landscape in which all kinds of enclaves have settled like Mars landings. Contemporary programs contrast with archaeological fragments. In topography, the urban layout is one gigantic, suprematist painting’ (2000: 101).

However modern urban environment, characterised by continuous displacement, seems to exceed the present cognitive and sensitive abilities of our species. For this reason, it changes the relation between people and the environment: ‘Flexibility and mobility are the source of new tensions, as the multiplication of urban rhythms and space-time requires increased coordination, synchronization, exactness and punctuality’ (During 2010: 271). A new spatiotemporal sensitivity emerges in the modern urban environment, one in which the moment of movement is felt and experienced as a valuable interference—not as a liminal state finally settling for stability in new ideals or dreamed societies, but as a qualitative state in itself.

This sensitivity to the moment of movement is not yet common in Euro-centric architectural discourse—but, as a result of an appreciation and conceptualisation of change and movement in Asian philosophy, it is common in Asian architecture. This chapter introduces Chinese community building and Japanese spatiotemporal sensitivity, as expressed through the concept *ma*, as an alternative to the negative connotation of continuous displacement in Euro-centric architectural discourse. In doing so this chapter

discusses how contemporary displacement and homelessness can also be understood as radical displacement in a positive sense; as a possibility for the experience of home within movement.

Making sense of displacement

Continuous displacement—sensorial hyper-stimulation and the ensuing state of shock, as apparent in the modern urban environment—usually translates into a form of psychic depression combined with spatiotemporal disorientation (During 2010). In the traditional city ‘that strives for a condition of balance, harmony and a degree of homogeneity’ (Koolhaas et al. 2001: 29) this is an exceptional state. But in the modern urban environment ‘that is a climate of permanent strategic panic based on the greatest possible difference between its parts—complementary or competitive, where not the methodical creation of the ideal counts but the opportunistic exploitation of flukes, accidents and imperfections’ (Koolhaas et al. 2001: 29), hyper-stimulation and, with it, spatiotemporal disorientation is a permanent condition. The emergence of the metropolis replaces stability with fluidity and therefore affects our traditional sense of home: ‘Whoever lives in Berlin long enough ends up not knowing where he is truly from. His existence is no longer shaped like a line but like a juxtaposition of dots’ (During 2010: 271). In *The Fate of Place*, Edward S. Casey (1997) refers to this experience of homelessness as the general shunning of place. Referencing the cataclysmic events of world wars and the forced migration of entire peoples, he argues that the world is nothing but a scene of endless displacement, and the massive spread of electronic technology makes where you are irrelevant. ‘It is as if the acceleration discovered by Galileo to be inherent in falling bodies has come to pervade the earth, rendering the planet a “global village” not in a positive sense but as a placeless place indeed’ (Casey 1997: xii).

Growing awareness of living in a liquid society (Bauman 2004) has inspired Euro-centric architects to design with change and movement in mind. Early Modernism increased flexibility through creating modular designs, which provide a fixed set of combinations based on functional properties. Structuralism approached change and movement through the design of solid, functional structures that allowed for open-ended variation in modules. And Postmodernism approached design with change and movement in the form of representation: literally designing ‘smooth and liquid’ architecture, often made fancier with parametric-designed, binary-coded, interactive moving elements. Unfortunately, none of these examples appear

to provide fulfilling solutions for the feeling of homelessness that is still so apparent in the modern urban environment. Standardized structures where ‘anything—no matter what’ can happen are more often than not reduced to empty boxes that lack any sense of belonging. The Cartesian, dualistic tendency to define stability seems stronger than the faith in movement and instability—especially in architectural practice, with still-standing forms as its expertise. Therefore, both literally and figuratively, Euro-centric architectural discourse needs a critical reflection upon its own constructions.

Resonance

In ‘Sensing the Virtual, Building the Insensible’, Canadian philosopher Brian Massumi (1998) argues that alternative sensitivities and socio-environmental relations can be found within a completely different philosophical mind-set and approach to architecture and movement. Instead of focusing on properties like modules and structures, change and movement should be embodied within architecture by focusing on quality—the emergent relation between what previously was understood as module and structure. To overcome the impasse between change and still-standing form, architects should ‘re-entertain questions about perception, experience and even consciousness’ (Massumi 1998: 5).

If we conceptualize change and movement as immanent and permanent conditions of human life, rather than as temporary irritants upon our way to a rationally perfect world, ‘being modern’ need not be defined in terms of dualistic Enlightenment thinking based on a single Euro-centric society. ‘Being modern’ becomes immanently changeable, moveable, and open-ended. (Schinkel 2011) As ‘being modern’ was already associated with critical self-questioning, it now also provides the ability to deal with so-called loss of the self, through the awareness that every definition of a whole is a temporary construction, a singularity rather than a stable identity. If we rehabilitate ourselves towards letting go of wholes and focus on emergent relations instead, there arises the possibility of experiencing home, change, and movement simultaneously. This is where the paradox, as criticized in Enlightenment thinking, suddenly becomes a valuable interference. The moment of movement is felt and valued and therefore obtains an ontological status of its own—not as a temporary state on its way to stability, but as a qualitative state in itself.

This qualitative state can be experienced through ‘resonance’. ‘Beyond the automated response triggered in the hyper-stimulated urban subject,

“parrying the shocks” can also take a positive and potentially emancipating turn, provided that one can see in it a capacity to develop new perceptive skills’ (During 2010: 273). These skills, like increased coordination, synchronization, exactness and punctuality, allow the possibility of experiencing the moment of movement. The moment of movement is in a way insensible: there seems to be no direct sensory input corresponding to your experience, yet you still effectively perceive it. Our experience of movement can survive the removal of its object. Through non-local resonance, this experience is ‘tied to the senses but lacking sense content, nonetheless “directly perceivable” but only in feeling’ (Massumi 2003: 142). It is a perception of relations. Therefore, ‘it is thus reasonable to hope that the man of the metropolis, “spiritually homeless” as Siegfried Kracauer phrased it, can again be moved by things in a lateral and peripheral relationship with an enveloping environment’ (During 2010: 274).

What does this philosophical change mean for contemporary architectural *praxis* (πρᾶξις) and the possibility of experiencing home within movement? Because of the long tradition in Asian philosophy and architecture of the appreciation and conceptualisation of change and movement, Asian examples give an indication of possible directions.

Chinese community building: the social approach

A first example of alternative sensibilities and socio-environmental relations in Asia is community building in Beijing. Community building in China is now a political-environmental programme in which the community no longer stands in opposition to the state as a bottom-up development, as in the West, or in cooperation with it, as in earlier communist examples. Instead, the community is recast as a partner in the governing process itself. This is government through community (Bray 2006). This programme is based on a long tradition of living and working in enclosed compounds and shows an alternative understanding of the wall as enclosing of social exchange rather than the wall as eliminating the Other. Beijing’s community building is therefore an example of home within movement.

Beijing’s communities

When arriving in Beijing for the first time, the Western visitor is immediately impressed by the dozens of new apartment buildings, superblocs, rising along the airport highway. From the perspective of Western knowledge of

architecture and urban planning, one can only be surprised by how the Chinese build their cities. However, a better understanding of the Beijing way of city planning would be a valuable addition and alternative to the Euro-centric discourse. The Chinese tradition of living and working in enclosed compounds has resulted in a concept of community that is as much about constructing new forms of physical space as it is about building new kinds of social and political organizations. Thus, providing adequate numbers of dwellings for urban inhabitants is no longer simply a matter of housing but, rather, a complicated task of community building.

The long Chinese tradition of living and working in communities can be roughly divided in three main community typologies; the *fang* (坊, 'walled residential district'), the *danwei* (单位) and the contemporary superblocks. The imperial community type, *fang*,¹ together with the royal city prototype and *siheyuan* (四合院, 'courtyard houses'), formed the basis of Beijing's urban plan until 1949. The royal city prototype, an urban ordering matrix based on a square with nine longitudinal and nine latitudinal streets and three gates on each side, gave rise to a clear and coherent system out of the city and its communities. The *fang* was a long rectangular enclosed residential site within the royal city prototype providing housing for roughly 1000 households. The streets running east-west connect the courtyard houses. This streets became a linear public space with a strong sense of community for local inhabitants. The highly modularized courtyard houses most typically consist of a front yard, inner yard and a back yard. The inner yard is a square surround by a main house in the north, a southern house opposite to the main house and two side houses in the east and west (Knapp 1999).

The imperial community was based on the Confucian hierarchical understanding of society and family relations (see Bracken, this volume; Li, this volume). The spatial hierarchy of the buildings was used to give each family (member) a proper place in a city, *fang*, and courtyard. The plan of a fully developed imperial city clearly expressed hierarchal relationships in terms of the sequencing of and circulation through walls, gates, and steps. The social organization was thus based on the image of human, especially family, relationships. Since family members during imperial times mostly had the same occupation, families with the same occupation grouped together in the *fang*. People living in the same or nearby *fang* often

1 During the Sui and Tang Dynasties the term *fang* (坊, 'walled residential district'), replaced the term *li* (里, the unit of distance that a walled neighborhood was supposed to be (i.e., one *li* square)). *Fang* (坊) was apparently adopted because it was a homophone for *fang* (防), which means 'to guard against' (Bray 2005: 207).

had similar occupations, forming enclosed neighborhoods with occupational homogeneity but personal wealth heterogeneity. Since both family and work cause strong social ties and roots for identification the community cohesion in the *fang* was tremendous. This was further supported by the local services provided like elementary schools, basic food and health services, and organized security.

The Maoist community type called *danwei* formed the basis of Beijing's urban plan between 1949-1987. Influenced by a new market-oriented economy, based on socialist ideology of the Soviet Union, it was presumed that industrial production was the major function of cities. Community cohesion during the Maoist period was based on work relations. A *danwei* is both a physical work and living unit as well as the common social and political organization system shared by all urban Chinese workplaces during in the Maoist period. Where social, political and spatial organization was already integrated in the *fang*, in the *danwei* there was no difference anymore between these disciplines. Everyone calls the social/political organization in which they are employed whether it be a factory, shop, school, hospital, research institute, cultural troupe, or party organ by the generic term *danwei*. *Danwei* differ in size and ownership. There are big units, up to 800 households, and small units, enterprises and businesses, publicly owned units as well as collectively owned utilities and even government and military units. Usually the living units are close to or combined with the workplace and provide public housing, all necessary services (health care, kindergartens, libraries, sports fields, guest houses, shops) and security for employees and their families. In contrary to the *fang* system *danwei* have their own complete identity within the structure of the city. Rather than following the regular grid system of the imperial city the streets are laid out in a flexible pattern to fit the particular needs of the unit to produce efficiently. *Danwei* are organized by a monumental centre where all services and public life is located (Bray 2005). In contrast to the monumental main buildings dwelling in the work unit is modest. The manufacturing flow determines the floor plan and the floor plan defines the form of the building. In order to solve the problem of housing shortages the government constructed many dormitory-like apartments in the newly built industrial areas with a standardized building system. These dormitory buildings had rooms on both north and south sides of the building with an inner corridor. These buildings are only used for sleeping, in the most basic *danwei* all other activities such as cooking, bathing, and socializing were done collectively in the main buildings of the compound which immediately activated a sense of community based on productive work relations.

Since the 1978 opening up of China, Beijing transformed into a global city with superblock apartments as the basic community typology. Spatial organization is based on a combination of qualities drawn from *fang* and *danwei* within standardized high-rise apartment buildings. Community cohesion is based on consumption (Fleischer 2007) and supported by the newly developed political-environmental programme called community building (Bray 2006). A super block is a city block that is much larger than a traditional city block occupied and enclosed by modernistic standardized high-rise apartment buildings. The spatial definition of a super block can be based on a single residential compound or on an urban block defined by major urban roads. Super blocks vary in size from 8 hectares in existing urban areas to 40 hectares in newly built area (Bray 2006). A super block community in China contains apartments and services for 100 to 1500 households. Every super block contains basic services like primary school, supermarket, security and government facilities. Depending on the size and quality of the super block, other social (sports, cultural) and commercial (shops) programme is included. Just like the *fang* and the *danwei* the super block is a walled community within the city. Different from the *fang* and the *danwei* the super block is, regularly, open during the day so all services within the super block are freely accessible also for outsiders. The apartments are standardized and based on one-, two-, or three-person families. Strict climate regulations make little variation possible in the design of the apartment blocks. Because of the size of the flats (regularly 25m by 25m) this often results in irregular floor plans with whimsical outlines to give kitchens ventilation and rooms on the north direct sunlight for one hour a day.

Under the influence of modernization and the 'one child policy' Chinese family structures started to diversify. Social ties based on family or work vanished, but the strong sense of community survived. The residential compound itself have become the basis for identification and lifestyle formation. A newly formed political program 'community building' supports this development. Where the *danwei* system was literally used to educate Mao's ideology, the current government seeks to develop more localized and sustainable forms of governance where citizens are mobilized and trained to govern themselves within the community. Urban residents have developed specific ideas about their living environment and lifestyle within the super block: to choose a house means to choose a lifestyle (Fleischer 2007). Although not based on family or work relations a strong sense of community remains based on contemporary 'community building'. Living in Beijing means being part of a community.

Enclosing social relations

While these three basic organizational units present different types of social structure, the enclosed compound continues in an unbroken historical line. Throughout history, the wall has been a central symbol for China (see Li, this volume). Apart from their defensive functions, walls in China are assumed to show social spaces. In the Western perspective, the wall presents closure, limitation, and social control; since the wall is a central symbol in Chinese society, China has been characterized as a ‘closed-off, earth-bound, backward-looking, and conservative peasant culture’ (Bray 2005: 18). However, all generalizations that associate Chinese walls with limitation and enclosure are too reductionist (Bray 2005: 16-37). In China, the most important thing about the wall is what lies within it. The wall is not seen as an act of enclosure or exclusion, but as embracement of a space that shows social relationships. This is something that Li Shiqiao further explores in *Understanding the Chinese City* (2014).

In line with Massumi, Bray suggests that it is possible to change the perspective, mind-set, and approach to architecture by providing an alternative, more fluid and relational concept of the wall. One of the most helpful Chinese symbols to understand this quality is the *bagua* (八卦). The written form of *bagua* consists of eight ‘trigrams’ (symbols comprising three parallel lines, either broken or unbroken, that represent *yin* (陰) or *yang* (陽) respectively—signifying the relationships between the five elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water), which are often portrayed around a centrally placed *yin-yang* (陰陽) symbol, which in turn is believed to have a void in the middle. This void is not empty, but rather filled with energy of relational movement between the elements (Yeo, Li 2007: 35, see Lacertosa, this volume for a further discussion of *dao* (道)). The traditional Chinese courtyard is the exemplary manifestation of this philosophy, as are the *fang*, *danwei*, and superblock on the urban scale. The most significant thing about the community or home experience is not the building, but the energized void and social relations marked by it. It is exactly this relational movement, the social exchange, that makes one feel at home.

The Japanese concept of *ma* (間): a conceptual approach

A more elaborate example of alternative sensibilities and socio-environmental relations can be found in the Japanese architectural context. The ancient Chinese understanding of home as an energized void in the historic and

symbolic representation of *bagua* has also influenced Japanese discourse. This section examines our understanding of home within movement with a more contemporary anthropology of the Japanese concept *ma* (間).

Commonly, *ma* is translated as the interval between two or more spatial or temporal things or events. It is not only used to suggest measurement, but also carries meanings like ‘gap’, ‘opening’, ‘space between’, and ‘time between’. However, this translation lacks a full understanding of the difference in approach to spatiality represented in *ma*. Based on the work of Japanese architect Arata Isozaki, the Dutch philosopher Henk Oosterling and Japan-based American architect Gunter Nitschke think it reasonable to argue that *ma*, in an architectural context, is not to be understood as just an interval or gap between two things or events. Like the Chinese notion *bagua*, *ma* is the understanding of an energized middle that makes a difference. ‘The original character of *Ma* consisted of the pictorial sign for “moon” (月), not the present day “sun” (日), under the sign for “gate” (門). For a Chinese or Japanese individual using language consciously this ideogram is depicting a delicate moment of the moonlight streaming through a gap in the entrance ways’ (Nitschke 1988: 48). *Ma* is not just a gap between two doors; it is the change and movement, the energization happening within this gap. *Ma* is a charged field and should be understood as a dynamic spatiotemporal interval. The conceptualization of *ma* provides a sensitivity to this alternative space-time experience within Japanese architectural discourse.

Sensing the moment of movement

Arata Isozaki acknowledges that *ma* is the primary medium of architecture: ‘Architects work with *Ma*’ (Oosterling 2005: 3). In his book *Japan-ness in Architecture* (2006), Isozaki explains *ma* through discussing various traditional Japanese architectural projects, of which the Ise shrine is most important in the context of this argument.

Ise Jingū is a complex composed of a large number of Shinto shrines. The complex is rebuilt every 20 years as a part of the Shinto belief in impermanence. The continuous activity of preparing the building process is part of the shrine complex’s atmosphere. This shows how home can be experienced within movement:

Etymologically *Ma* is rooted in Shinto religion. It has a ritual background [...] Of course these ritual spatiotemporal sites are not solely confined to Japanese religious culture. But the specific Japanese character is found in how the ‘descent’ of gods is enacting in order to install a relationship

between nature, men and gods. *Ma* is a practice, a performance. It is the formless within the informatization (Oosterling et al. 2000: 37).

Ma was introduced to Western discourse in an Isozaki-designed exhibition in Paris in 1978. The exhibition consisted of nine spatial, visual, and sculptural installations in which different dimension of *ma* were made experiential. Isozaki elaborates on *ma* in several ways, such as these following definitions:

Ma is a place in which a life is lived. *Ma* organizes the process of movement from one place to another. *Ma* is the structural unit of living space. *Ma* is maintained by absolute darkness. *Ma* is a system for indicating the place upon which the gods descend. *Ma* divides the world. *Ma* is a signal of the ephemeral. *Ma* is an empty place where all kinds of phenomena appear, pass by and disappear, it is an alignment of signs (Isozaki 1978).

And, of great significance for this argument, '*Ma* is a way to sense the moment of movement' (Isozaki 1978: 24). This indicates that the moment of movement is a singular event with an ontological status of its own and becomes a moment of home within movement.

Oosterling (2000) elaborates on this conceptualization of space-time by reminding us that when Westerners think and talk about space they mean the distance between objects, but in Japan the focus is instead on relation and performance. In the West, architects are taught to perceive and react to the arrangements of objects and to think of space as empty, but 'In *Ma* space and time are both involved: *Ma* is a dynamic space-time interval wherein activity and passivity, agents and patients are one and the same, yet different' (Oosterling 2005: 5). *Ma* is not empty space; it is a charged interval, immaterial but active and real. With *ma* the Japanese foster a sensitivity, literally a sense organ for movement, that is not yet apparent in the Euro-centric architectural discourse. *Ma* as a spatio-temporal interval makes it possible to experience and value paradox: activity and passivity can happen at the same time; home and movement can resonate simultaneously.

The fifth dimension

Sensitivity to *ma* is, thus, an alternative to Euro-centric space-time interpretation. It gives another dimension to the daily architecture practice. Inspired by Nitschke's work on *ma*, it is reasonable to argue that a 'fifth dimension' of architecture can be introduced. In his essay '*Ma*, the Japanese sense of place in old and new architecture and planning', Nitschke (1966) elaborates on the

five dimensions in which *ma* is used in the Japanese language. In the first dimension, *ma* indicates 'span' and relates to the Western first dimension of distance in a single line. This is followed by the second dimension of a plane, in Japanese measurements more commonly known as the *tatami* (畳, 'room'). The third dimension is understood as empty space or a cube. In the Euro-centric interpretation of spatial measurements these three dimensions are enough to discuss architecture, but *ma* is also used in the fourth dimension, time, to indicate the duration between two moments. Furthermore, *ma* is used in what Nitschke calls the 'fifth dimension and subjective realm' to indicate quality. According to Nitschke's (1966) examples: in the sentence 'the *Ma* of his speech is excellent', *ma* is used to qualify the excellent manner in which the length, character, and pauses of someone's speech are used. In relation to space: 'the *Ma* is bad' can be used when someone feels that they can no longer remain in a certain place because either their own *ma* and/or the *ma* of the place is negative. *Ma* thus indicates the quality of an event, be it speech, dance, music, or environment. This quality is not defined by its properties, but felt by its intensity. *Ma* indicates the architectural quality of the energized, charged field experienced directly through (non-local) resonance.

The fifth dimension creates an awareness and sensitivity to quality in the moment of movement and with that a more fluid sense of home. In my opinion, alternative sensibilities and social-environmental relations to Euro-centric architectural discourse are to be found in the potential of the fifth dimension, which can be understood as 'energy' or 'intensity'.

Potential aesthetics of movement

In the fifth dimension, architecture is about 'making sense of intensities' (Hendrickx 2014). In Chinese community building this is visible in the integration of social relations and participation during the building process. In Japan this is visible in the conceptualisation of dynamic space-time in *ma*. The potential of the fifth dimension lies not only in the literal flow of energy, as studied in contemporary sustainable architecture, or in flow of information in the Internet-society, but in a social and aesthetic realm that can provide new sensibilities and social-environmental relations. The fifth dimension therefore trains one's sensitivity to energy and intensity through an aesthetics of movement.

A traditional Japanese example of this aesthetic awareness is explained by David A. Slawson in his book on *The Secret Teachings of Japanese Gardens*

(2013). Spatial experience in these gardens is not based on functions or properties, but on the ‘moments of movement’ created by the juxtaposition of rocks, trees, and bushes in a very specific way. During the design process, vectors indicate the intended moments of movement in the sketches. Sensitivity to intensity is trained and experienced through the creation of language. A diversity of aesthetic concepts is developed to increase sensitivity. One of the examples from the vocabulary of scenic and sensory effects is *fuzei* (風情, ‘local conditions’—not unlike the French concept of *terroir*). *Fuzei* implies a poetic, quality-oriented approach to design, resulting in spatial compositions that awaken a sense of movement within still-standing objects through the use of framing and perspective. Some of these traditional concepts are still used in present-day Japanese architectural discourse, helping architects foster sensitivity to movement and change.

More contemporary manifestations of a similar approach to the design process are visible in, for example, the experimental work of the architect Shusaku Arakawa and the philosopher Madeleine Gins. Installations such as ‘Nagi’s Ryoanji’ or ‘The Site of Reversible Destiny’ in Yoro park, Gifu explore alternative body movement in space. Architect Hiroshi Sambuichi is currently focusing on ‘moving materials’, in which an aesthetics of movement is explored:

The materials of the twentieth century are glass, concrete and steel, the materials of the twenty-first century are air, water and, sun; the moving materials. The scenes of the earth that we find beautiful are scenes of instant circulations produced by energy. One role of architecture is to beautifully manifest the characteristic regional phenomena of these transformation, of change and movement (Sambuichi 2016).

Junya Ishigami’s study for the KAIT workshop in Kanakawa Prefecture also focuses on flow and opens a different approach to architecture. By not focusing on individual spaces, but on movement, he was able to design a flow free of geometry or rules. Place emerges as a temporary moment within movement.

My intention was not to plan individual spaces in different locations of the building one by one. I wanted to create a space in which the whole and the parts are infinitely close to having equal value. I do recognize that it is possible for a flexibility to emerge, out of plans or factors, that become so homogenous the particular properties of the spaces all but disappear. But here I was beginning to think that there could be a flexibility that results

when the plans or other different factors remain in effect, from simply softening and blurring their boundaries [...] As we deform the spaces step by step we gradually discover the relation between part and whole. During the course of this work the spaces meandering and filling out between the columns began to feel like transparent clay (Ishigami 2008: 4).

In Euro-centric discourse it is also possible to indicate micro-revolutions that show a growing awareness of an alternative spatio-temporal sensitivity in the fifth dimension. Processes indicated in Euro-centric discourse where potential aesthetics of movement are emerging include the renewed focus on craftsmanship, participation in urban design, and revitalization by renovation. An elaborate study of both contemporary Japanese examples and the potential to change Euro-centric discourse is needed to further develop both this argument and training in this alternative spatiotemporal sensitivity to intensity.

Radical displacement

The fifth dimension is a dynamic spatiotemporal interval and therefore defies the provision of a defined architectural or pedagogical methodology. The experience of homelessness is also a challenge for designers in the Asian urban environment, as indicated by this chapter's opening quote by Félix Guattari. But the Asian examples discussed can inspire alternative sensitive abilities and socio-environmental relations in Euro-centric architectural discourse.

Training for an alternative spatio-temporal sensitivity to intensity through the development of an aesthetics of movement will, in my opinion, open Euro-centric architectural discourse to a potential morphogenesis of resonance. When this happens, a positive experience of home within movement is possible. Displacement causes shock and spatio-temporal disorientation, but within traditional Japanese examples such as Ise Jingu the appreciation of change and movement results in a very minor form of displacement, in which the shock and disorientation are solely focused on the detachment from material values. This value is not created by the specific wooden beams and columns that the shrine was built from in its 'original state', but by the performance of construction and with that the charged field of intensity created on the site. In the modern urban environment, shock and disorientation are more intense, and therefore an increased sense of detachment might change the mind-set and trigger a sensitivity that opens up to felt intensity of home within movement.

To experience this, the last suggestion of this chapter is to visit the Go'o shrine by Hiroshi Sugimoto in the Art House Project on Naoshima in the Kagawa Prefecture, Japan. What can be experienced there is an ultimate manifestation of home within movement. The glass stair indicates direction, a movement towards the platform, but just before the stair reaches its goal there is a gap between the last step and the final destination. This gap is not empty but filled with energy: the intensity to go up. Within the gap a valuable and paradoxical interference resonates. Flow and pause are simultaneous. The Go'o Shrine shows a dynamic space-time interval filled with an intense moment of home within movement. There is nothing philosophical going on here, it is all comprehended immediately.

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12. The Concept of 'Home'

The Javanese Creative Interpretation of *Omah Bhetari Sri*:
A Dialogue between Tradition and Modernity

Sri Teddy Rusdy, Brandon Cahyadhuha, and Hastangka

Abstract

People build houses mainly because of climactic conditions, especially conditions that would not otherwise support human activities. It is because of the houses we build for shelter that human activities can continue despite these adverse conditions. In the Javanese concept, a house or home is a symbolic unity, a symbol of status, and a practical thing. A home in Javanese philosophy shows a dialogue with its owner, responding to changes in time and technology. One's values, and how they grow and change over time, are represented in the changes to a home. A home does not just mean a house to live in, but is also an expression of *jati diri* (the character of the owner), as well as an expression of social relations within society. Because of this, as the owner's needs change, so too will the home. Home is sometimes defined as domestic life, but it can also be a way of understanding the philosophy of the Javanese way of life, particularly with regard to space and its interaction with the Javanese understanding of a cosmic system. The concept of home in Javanese culture can be expressed through ornament and the structure of the building. It is inspired by feeling, taken from reason, belief, religious values, and *magi* (supernatural power).

Keywords: home, Javanese architecture, tradition, modernity

Introduction

The discourse on home, house, and family is an interesting subject matter in the philosophy of humanism, architecture, society, culture, and life.

Bracken, G., *Ancient and Modern Practices of Citizenship in Asia and the West. Care of the Self, Volume I*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019

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Every society defines a home, house, and/or family in various ways. Asian and Western cultures generally have different perspectives in defining and understanding these concepts. A number of dictionaries define 'home' and 'house' in different ways. For example, a 'home' is the place where one lives permanently, especially as a member of a family or a household.¹ Meanwhile, a 'house' means a building for human habitation, especially one that is lived in by a family or small group of people.² The word 'home' focuses on human existence in the world; it indicates that human beings have an important role in giving meaning to human existence on the earth. The term 'home' also has deep meaning within Javanese society. Terms such as *tanah leluhur* ('homeland') or to *merasa di rumah* ('feel at home') are common terminology in Indonesian society. They seem to indicate certain cosmic, psychological, and/or philosophical interactions within human life, particularly when humans define the term 'home'. Compared to the definition of the word 'house', which simply refers to a thing, an entity, it is also referring to a certain infrastructure, in a certain place. The relation between architecture and culture becomes problematic especially in the identity and categorisation of architecture as a cultural product of a given regime (Baydar 2004: 19).

Furthermore, we would like to distinguish between 'home', as a term for a certain type of building, and 'house', which indicates a building in a certain place. The term 'house' also refers to a building's structure. The word 'building', used for translating the word 'house', contains a certain dimension of quantity and of material things. In Chinese, the word for family and/or house and home is *jia* (家). There are a number of terms relating to the Chinese concept of *jia*. Some that are most relevant for this research are *jia ju* (家具, 'furniture'), *jia ting* (家庭, 'the family'), and *jia ren* (家人, 'the members of a family'). As in the Chinese tradition, dealing with the meaning of a house and a home shows that the philosophy of a home in Asian cultures is related with a metaphysical dimension. The metaphysical dimension can be explored in the philosophy of a home in traditional society.

In Javanese culture, the word for house is *griya*, while the word for home is *omah*. A home in Javanese culture has multiple dimensions. Komarudin Hidayat states that a home is an expression of one's self and outlook on

1 See <http://translate.google.com/#auto/id/home> (last accessed 20 March 2016); <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/home> (last accessed 20 March 2016); <http://www.oxford-dictionaries.com/definition/english/home?q=+a+home> (last accessed 20 March 2016).

2 See <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/house?q=+a+house> (last accessed 20 March 2016); <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/house> (last accessed 20 March 2016); <https://translate.google.com/#auto/id/house> (last accessed 20 March 2016).

life (2014: 4). A home is a place of consolidation, a place to reflect on life's processes. Atonius Ardiyanto, for example, has stressed that traditional Javanese architecture is one of Java's cultural products. Such an architectural product has multiple functions: it has a domestic function as well as a social one (Ardiyanto 2014: 38; see also Santosa 2000). The Javanese house is rich in symbolic meaning, social-cultural values, and architectural values. Those meanings are produced from specific environmental conditions, both cultural and climatic. Mohammad Sobary describes Javanese house architecture as enabling the harmonious combination of the material world and the world of ideas. This combination of the physical with the spiritual is an expression of aesthetic values that is full of complex philosophical meanings (Sobary 2014: 4). A house is seen as an answer to the needs of the owner, both internally and externally, spiritually and physically. This makes the house a perfect place for not just physical shelter, but also spiritual comfort.

Architectural influences on the Javanese home

This study will explore the Javanese concept of home, beginning with an examination of how Javanese society views and imagines this concept in time and space, and with regard to its interaction with the cosmic order. How does Javanese society interpret the concept of home in response to changing values? It does this through a process of dialogue that examines transformations in social values that cause changes in the world over time, and which have an influence on the home. What kind of values, norms, and aesthetic concepts of home still exist in the Javanese conception of the word today? And what is the difference between the philosophy of the home in both Javanese and Western cultures?

By studying theories of function, form, and meaning, we have surveyed the structure, function, and philosophy of the Javanese house. We identified the cosmic order in the concept of home as providing a frame of continuity despite changes to the spaces of Javanese architecture. We also found that the philosophy behind the concept of home, in its Javanese architectural interpretation, could be usefully compared to Western practices of philosophy when it comes to architectural design and forms. According to the theories of function, form, and meaning, the function of a home for Javanese society is not just a place to live, it is also a place to develop relationships among family member, and even share happiness. The form of the home is divided in two. First, a rectangular shape, with a form designed to give opportunity

for the owner and the family to feel integrated into the space. Second, a square form, which is designed to develop interaction more intimately among family members. The meaning of home in Javanese society can be cultivated in the function and form of the home.

There are two fundamental meanings of home in Javanese society. First, social, where a home is a place to interact between and with other people; especially between neighbours. In the traditions of Javanese society, a home always contains public space and is always open for people to discuss life, society, and future social and political conditions. Secondly, the spiritual meaning, where it is a place to venerate ancestors.

Looking at the Javanese history of architectural acculturation, it is evident that traders and immigrants have played an important role in influencing Java's architectural traditions. Indians, Chinese, Arabs, and Dutch all dwelt in Java for long periods of time. Java was long known as a place for trade and was attractive to immigrants eager to get rich from its resources. Chinese traders arrived in central Java starting in the early fourteenth century and had a great influence on the architectural character of traditional Javanese houses, particularly along the northern coastal regions of central and eastern Java (Fauzy and Salura 2012a: 2). Bachtiar Fauzy and Purnama Salura also explain how a group of Arabs affected the architectural development of Javanese houses in the Gresik region of east Java. The first group of Arab traders arrived in Surabaya around 1850 and settled in this area (Fauzy and Salura 2012b: 434).

According to Ardiyanto, traditional architecture was also influenced by modern Western architecture during the later Dutch colonial period, particularly in the early years of the twentieth century (approximately 1910 to the 1940s), when many Dutch architects were working and practicing in Indonesia (Ardiyanto 2014). Other architectural trends in Indonesia were based on modern architecture, as developed in North America and Europe (Ardiyanto 2014: 37).

Peter J.M. Nas states that mainstream residential architecture in Indonesia is clearly rooted in vernacular forms (1998: 335). Helen Jessup also stresses how the colonial condition can bring about changes within society, especially regarding architecture and town-planning (1985: 138). Wiendu Nuryanti underlines architecture's role as a space of teaching and a bridge that mediates the world of values inside and outside the house. This is done via a process of personal growth, much like a father and mother who oversee the growth of their children (Nuryanti 2014: 5), so that the concept of building a home as part of building an inner world for its owner is very Javanese. A home is an expression of the inner life of Javanese people. Taking this into account keeps Javanese culture alive.

The Javanese concept of home

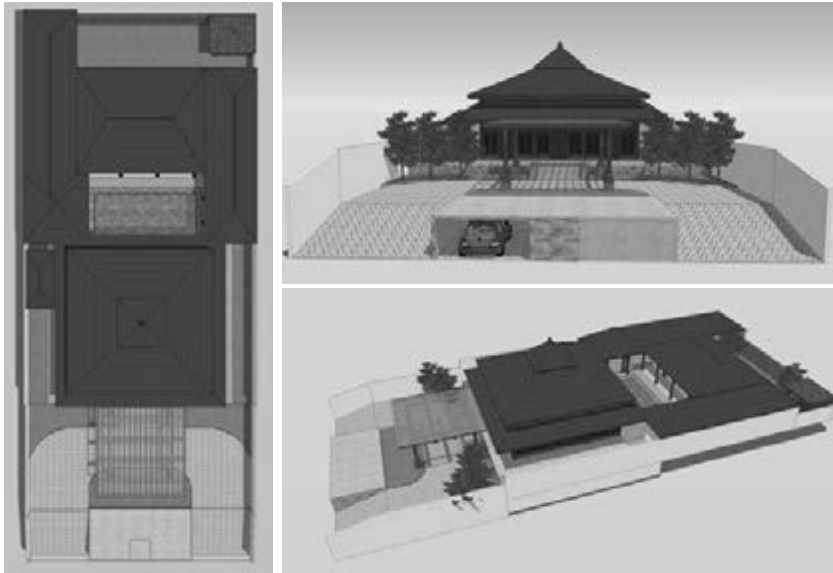
In Javanese, the word 'home' is usually translated as *omah*. The word *omah* comes from the traditional Javanese language known as *Ngoko*. This language is commonly spoken by ordinary people in Java. It indicates the spontaneous expression of their feelings of the concept of home. *Omah* is the most common word in Javanese society for home (Muqoffa 2016: 160). The word *omah* symbolises both a particular concept of 'home' and an actual dwelling place, where domestic practices take place (Muqoffa 2016: 160).

The word *omah* is connected to Javanese architecture and contrasted to the word *ndalem*, which is the term for a noble's house, usually a complex of two or more buildings surrounded by a high wall. Each building within a *ndalem* has a different style of traditional Javanese architecture, such as a *pendapa*, *dalem*, or *gandhok* (Muqoffa 2016: 160).

The design concept of the Javanese architecture is based on Java manuscript, known as '*Kawruh Kalang*' (Muqoffa 2016). '*Kawruh Kalang*' itself is a Javanese building design guidance. From 5 types of the Javanese houses, *Joglo* is the most often discussed as a representation of the Javanese architecture. *Joglo* house is usually owned by rich people or is owned by the highly respected people and has a high social status in the Javanese community. *Joglo* house is highly cost and needs more materials, therefore only rich people who can effort to built *Joglo*. The shape of *Joglo* house is usually square and has four main columns/pillars. The arrangement of the main spaces in *Joglo* house are divided into three parts, namely meeting hall or '*pendapa*', living room or space that is used to perform a puppet show called '*pringgitan*', and a back part of the house called '*ndalem*' or '*omah jero*' which functioned as a family room (Ardiyanto 2014: 38).

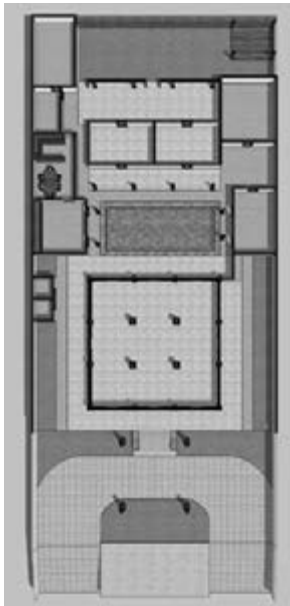
In traditional Javanese architecture, when references are made to the upper-class type of Javanese house, they demonstrate a number of principles. According to Sultan Hamengkubuwono X, there are three main structures: 1) the *pendapa* ('open pavilion') in front; 2) the *dalem ageng* ('walled living quarters') at the back; and 3) the *pringgitan* ('connecting passageway') between them (2014). The living quarters contain several sections: the main part has a bedroom and is considered the most sacred place of the house called as *krobongan*, and used for rituals and meditation (Prijetomo, quoted in Nas 1998: 338). The rest of the Javanese home's layout consists of the following: 1) *pendapa* (small hall), 2) *pringgitan*, open structure in front

Figure 12.1 *Omah bethari sri* (traditional Javanese house)



Source: drawing by authors

Figure 12.2 Structure of the *omah bethari sri*



Source: drawing by authors

of the mansion behind the *pendapa*, for showing shadow plays or receiving visitors. 3) *palem ageng* (small area to relax), 4) *senthong* (place to store goods), 5) *gadri* (place to meditate), and 6) *pawon* (kitchen). Sacred values (and privacy) increase from the front to the back of the house, where the most sacred places can be found in the *senthong tengah* (middle rooms) (Hamengkubuwono, quoted in Rizal 2014: 15).

As a reflection of the concept of Javanese architectural design and its place in Javanese society, a home has a meaning and is a reflection of a life. It is the expression of Javanese thought in architectural form.

Figure 12.1 shows how the structure of the building reflects Javanese philosophical and cosmological concepts derived from indigenous Javanese communities. These communities' confidence and trust in the existence of another world has brought to the house a representation of Javanese philosophy and way of life. Javanese people see themselves as living in harmony with their environment. For example, most buildings face south, reflecting cosmological precepts. The main door is to the south (rather than the north). This has a philosophical meaning because south represents harmony. Javanese houses are invariably oriented to the south.

Figure 12.2 shows the *pendapa*, a large open structure or veranda attached to the central space of the house. It also shows the *pawon* (kitchen) and *pringgitan* (an open structure in front of the house, behind the *pendapa*) used for showing shadow plays or receiving visitors. The transition space between the public and private parts of the house is located between the *pendapa* and the *ndalem ageng* (prominent house). The *senthong* is a small inner room traditionally used for family ceremonies and to store things. The position of this place, behind the *pringgitan* (Fauzy and Salura 2012a: 4) means it is sometimes used for the contemplation of the spiritual life by the house's owner. Compared to Western concepts of home, which stress its practical functions, the Javanese concept is a place for the imagination; it is about cosmic relations and the order between the human and the divine.

With its mystical insights into Javanese life, Javanese architecture offers a new interpretation of the ornaments that beautify the traditional home. In both the front and back yards (also known as the *baleretna* areas) there are a number of statues of elephants, animals known to have good memory. These elephants are the symbol of hope and represent the god *Bethara Guru*, whose wife *Bethari Uma* is invoked when parents want their children to be skilled in science. (These gods had a son, *Ganesa*, also known as *Bethara Gana*, who is represented as an elephant-headed man.). The elephants are placed as a complement to the house.

Figure 12.3 Front yard and front door

Source: photo by authors

The *pendapa*, or main area of the house, is made for receiving guests. It consists of three main areas: 1) an area where the guests can wait; 2) an area for meeting; and 3), an area for relaxing. In Javanese philosophy, the *pendapa* is a statement of the dualism of Javanese society, which requires balance. The purpose of human life is *sejatining urip* ('the perfect life'), and also *sejatning laku* ('impeccable behaviour'), the dualism of Javanese society is expressed in

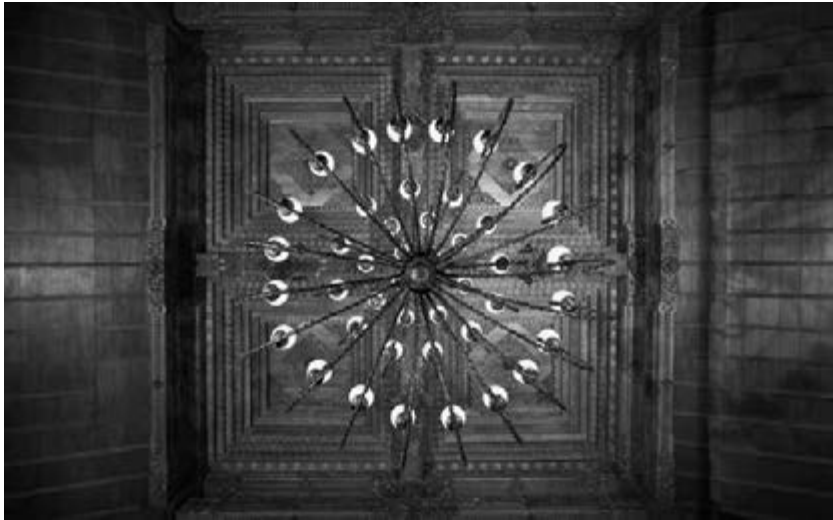
Figure 12.4 *Pendapa*

Source: photo by authors

the way of life of Javanese society. On the one hand, the material world, and the other, the spiritual, combined in a perfect life. (This is also something that is explored in Gregory Bracken's Chapter 1, 'Citizenship and the Good Life'.)

The *pendapa* aims to create a social space. According to Djono, Utomo, and Subiyantoro (quoted in Ardiyanto 2014: 39), the *pendapa* is an application of Javanese social space as it is a public sphere for social interaction. The sacred atmosphere of the *pendapa* is centred on the middle of its four main pillars. The top of the pillars are called *mayangkara*, *dhadha peksi*, and *singep*, while the roof is *tumpang sari*. This refers to the process of human life in society, from birth to death (and back to God). *Mayangkara* refers to the traditional Javanese puppets who represent good leadership skills and are honest, brave, powerful, and tough. The *mayangkara* ornaments contain decorative motifs such as *patran* ('stylized plants') and *mega mendhung walikan* ('geometric motifs'), which represent black and white, life and death, and day and night to remind the viewer that the nature of the world is both good and bad. The *dhadha peksi* is a transverse beam. It is ornamented with various motifs to look as imposing as possible. Ornaments such as bees symbolise the fact that in order to get something sweet, people have to work hard. The *tumpang sari* is another type of beam, located higher up in the pyramidal roof. This is decorated with a pattern of grain and drops of

Figure 12.5 *Lampu gantung*



Source: photo by authors

water exposed to sunlight, representing the sources of life and light. Inside the *pendapa* there is a *lampu gantung* ('chandelier'), which is designed with up to seven layers of light. This reflects the seven levels of the ladder (*tumpangsari*) decoration towards the top of the ceiling, as it narrows, and symbolises the Javanese belief in seven heavens.

After the *pendapa* are the *pringgitan* and the *ndalem ageng*. The *pringgitan* is an entry space for the *ndalem ageng*, which is in turn connected to the *pendapa*. In larger houses, these spaces are surrounded by open terrain and even pools of water. To the left of the *pendapa* is a library for self-cultivation. Education is a priority in traditional Javanese culture, and this is a space to support and facilitate enrichment of the intellect through the attainment of knowledge.

Figure 12.6 shows the dimensions of cosmic space as reflected in the *ndalem ageng* (middle room), which is interpreted as a space for dialogue and communication with others. As a social space it symbolises the fact that society is philosophically determined by our nature as social but individual beings. Social context are marked by a social space that illustrates the concept of the Javanese house as being characterised by firm and clear boundaries between the social and the individual. Figure 12.7 shows the library as a space to learn about life and to take advice from one's parents.

The *gadri* area is a porch, and there is also a small separate building called a *baleretna*. This is used for family gatherings and private discussions.

Figure 12.6 *Dalem ageng*

Source: photo by authors

Figure 12.7 Library

Source: photo by authors

The *baleretna* is a place to display and care for *batik*. It is also where the private family garden can be found. The *gadri* area is an open space that allows air to flow throughout the house to ensure good ventilation. It is also where informal interactions between guests can take place, and is used by the family for private dining. The relation between *gadri* and *baleretna* becomes a social space for people to interact.

Figure 12.8 *Baleretna and gadri areas*



Source: photo by authors

The Javanese concept of the home has philosophical dimensions that inform its meanings from the traditional to the modern. In the traditional meaning, the Javanese concept of a home in society stresses cosmological and metaphysical meanings. Meanwhile, in the modern reading of the home, the structure and function is the same as for traditional Javanese architecture but with a difference in meaning, because the meaning of

home in Javanese society stresses both social and spiritual dimensions. The function of the home helps to locate the human in relation to nature and the supernatural. While the architecture of the traditional Javanese house may also accommodate some foreign stylistic influences, it mostly reflects the traditional Javanese relationship between humans and God.

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Afterword

Gregory Bracken

What can we now say about city and society and the care of the self? From Cicero, we learned that political engagement is key to the good life. Plato asks ‘What is good?’ while Aristotle actually shows us ways of *how* to be good with his ‘doctrine of the mean’. This is an idea that strongly resonates with Confucius’ *junzi* (君子, ‘gentleman’). By leading a good life of political engagement—after all, we are basically *zoon politikon* (ζῷον πολιτικόν, ‘political animals’)—it should be possible to achieve *eudaimonia* (εὐδαιμονία, ‘flourishing’) in our lives through proper care of the self.

Li Shiqiao explored the care of the self in China, pointing to some crucial differences with the Western, Greco-Roman-derived conceptions of this kind of care. He warns (as he also does in his book *Understanding the Chinese City*) that the historical Western models of city life may be inappropriate or even inimical to a proper understanding of Chinese urban life. This may also be causing great damage to the Chinese city. One of the main aims of the research presented in this volume is to free our reading of the city (and society) from too narrow and too overly Western understandings of the city. One of the main aims of this volume is to try and see a new openness in the acceptance of other perspectives on the city and society.

It has also helped that a number of the papers in this volume have taken such theoretical stances in their investigations into the city and city life. Michel Foucault’s work has proved its continuing relevance more than thirty years after his untimely death in 1984. Luiz Paulo Leitão Martins’ papers highlight Foucault’s ‘biopolitics of power’ to look at how *ars erotica* (‘erotic art’) can be both detached from a scientific model of knowledge and related to the use of pleasure for care of the self.

Other contributors have used Chinese philosophy in their explorations. Massimiliano Lacertosa’s reinterpretation of *dao* (道) establishes a philosophy of comparison that embraces both theoretical hypotheses and methodological *praxis* (πραξις) to propose a different approach to its

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understanding. Klaas Kresse's reading of the Confucian *junzi* (君子, 'gentleman'), on the other hand, shows its very real and profound influence on contemporary land-use planning in South Korea, particularly regarding the provision of education.

This use of theory to understand architectural practice also informs Karan August's chapter, who describes how some spaces—which she calls 'elective spaces'—afford better opportunities for the practice of care than do others. She also looks at architecture's role in motivating the creation of such spaces, something that is echoed rather nicely in Renske Maria van Dam's investigations into how the concept of *Ma* (間) can inspire us to look at the contemporary urban environment from a fresh perspective. By using an ancient Japanese concept, which she sees as a potential 'fifth dimension' for architecture that has the power to free us from an overly Western or Euro-centric reading of space, her chapter harks back to Li Shiqiao's call for a less narrowly Western focus. This reading of Asian architecture using Asian concepts is also reflected in the paper by Sri Teddy Rusdy, Brandon Cahyadhuha, and Hastangka's, which describes in great detail the traditional Javanese home.

The importance of history is reflected in papers by Christian de Pee and Yun Gao and Nicholas Temple, whereas the comparative analysis of Eastern and Western examples, as undertaken by Katharina M. Borgmann and Deirdre Sneep and Ian R. Lewis, have provided further, practical examples of the importance of freeing ourselves from a too-Western perspective.

These essays all explore what it means to live in the built environment, whether in the East or the West, whether today or in the past. Some of the ideas explored in this volume have come down to us through millennia, only to reassert themselves in new and surprising ways. Looking at history helps us to understanding the present. Of course, the view that we can better understand the present by investigating the past is something of a cliché; in fact, the reverse is probably true—we tend to interpret the past through our knowledge of the present—but it is essential to try to understand the past because, as many of these papers show, it still has relevance for present-day urban life. We may even be able to better plan for the future as a result.

Whether theoretical, practical, or both, these papers help illuminate some of the practices, ancient and modern, that relate to care of the self in the city and society. This helps us reflect on the real world, understand its challenges, and even plan for the future by thinking of new ways of dealing with them. This task will be continued in Volume II because, as Bertrand Russell tells us:

Philosophy is to be studied, not for the sake of any definite answers to its questions, since no definite answers can, as a rule, be known to be true, but rather for the sake of the questions themselves, because these questions enlarge our conception of what is possible, enrich our intellectual imagination, and diminish the dogmatic assurance which closes the mind against speculation; but above all because, through the greatness of the universe which philosophy contemplates, the mind also is rendered great, and becomes capable of that union with the universe which constitutes the highest good (Russell 1912: 81).

What is important in these papers is not that some of them look to philosophy or to the past in an attempt to make sense of what has gone before, but that we use the knowledge that we uncover to try and make better sense of our lives today. This is particularly important in an increasingly urbanized world, one that seems to afford less and less time for the simpler pleasures, such as taking time to reflect on what life is actually about. After all, Socrates tells us that the unexamined life is not worth living. What we do with these examinations, however, is the important thing; as Aristotle said, 'Knowledge alone does not make a person wise; he has to act on it' (2011: 105).

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